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Independence for Bank of England

Brown raises interest rates then yields control of them

By JILL SHERMAN AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

GORDON BROWN surrendered the power to set interest rates to the Bank of England yesterday in a surprise move designed to prove Labour's determination to control inflation.

The Chancellor announced one of the biggest changes in economic policy-making this century moments after raising the base rate a quarter point to 6.25 per cent.

It was to be his first and last interest rate pronouncement, he said, as he explained that future decisions were to be taken out of politicians' hands to prevent them seeking short-term popularity with the voters.

The decision delighted the City, sending both the pound and the stock market to new highs. The FT-SE 100 index cleared 4,500 for the first time, closing up 53.7 at 4,519.3, and the pound touched a post-ERM record, rising more than 2½ pence to DM2.8202.

Traders were surprised at the speed and scale of the reforms, but they said they boded well for Mr Brown's reputation and went some way to achieving his stated aim of being an "iron chancellor". The interest rate rise was also widely applauded in the City, which has become increasingly concerned about the speed of economic growth.

Explaining his decision yesterday, Mr Brown said that the higher rate was necessary to stop inflation overshooting the Government's 2.5 per cent target next year. Economic forecasts had shown that there was a threat from increased consumer spending, surging house prices, higher earnings and the growing money supply. Aides suggested that Treasury figures showed that inflation could be nearer 4 per cent by the end of next year.



Gordon Brown yesterday: "time for tough decisions"

But the main focus of yesterday's announcement was the decision to give the Bank of England effective independence. Although Mr Brown and Tony Blair had been working on the idea for some time, they had never suggested that it would happen in the first week of government.

From next month, Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, and a nine-member committee will determine interest rates to meet an inflation target set by the Government.

ed by Mr George and the committee will set interest rates by majority vote.

The Prime Minister, who planned the announcement with Mr Brown on Sunday night, was said to regard the move as "the biggest decision in economic policy-making since the war", giving important signal that Labour would govern in the way it promised. It was a bold, decisive act of leadership that showed "we will not shirk from any decision that will help the long-term prosperity of Britain", Downing Street said.

Mr Brown told his Treasury press conference: "This is the time to take the tough decisions we need for the long-term interests and the prosperity of the country. We will not shrink from the tough decisions needed to deliver stability for long-term growth. I have therefore decided to give the Bank of England

operational responsibility for setting interest rates, with immediate effect."

Although the changes take place immediately, they will be backed by a short Bill next month. The Chancellor will have powers to override the Bank in exceptional circumstances — for example if war breaks out — but in most cases, including a run on the pound, Mr George and his committee would take full responsibility for any emergency changes in interest rates.

Mr Brown vigorously denied that the move marked the first step to signing up to a single European currency, saying the reform was "a British solution to suit British domestic needs". It was still highly unlikely that the Government would adopt the euro in 1999, and further legislation would be needed to meet the blueprint for independent central banks outlined in the Maastricht criteria.

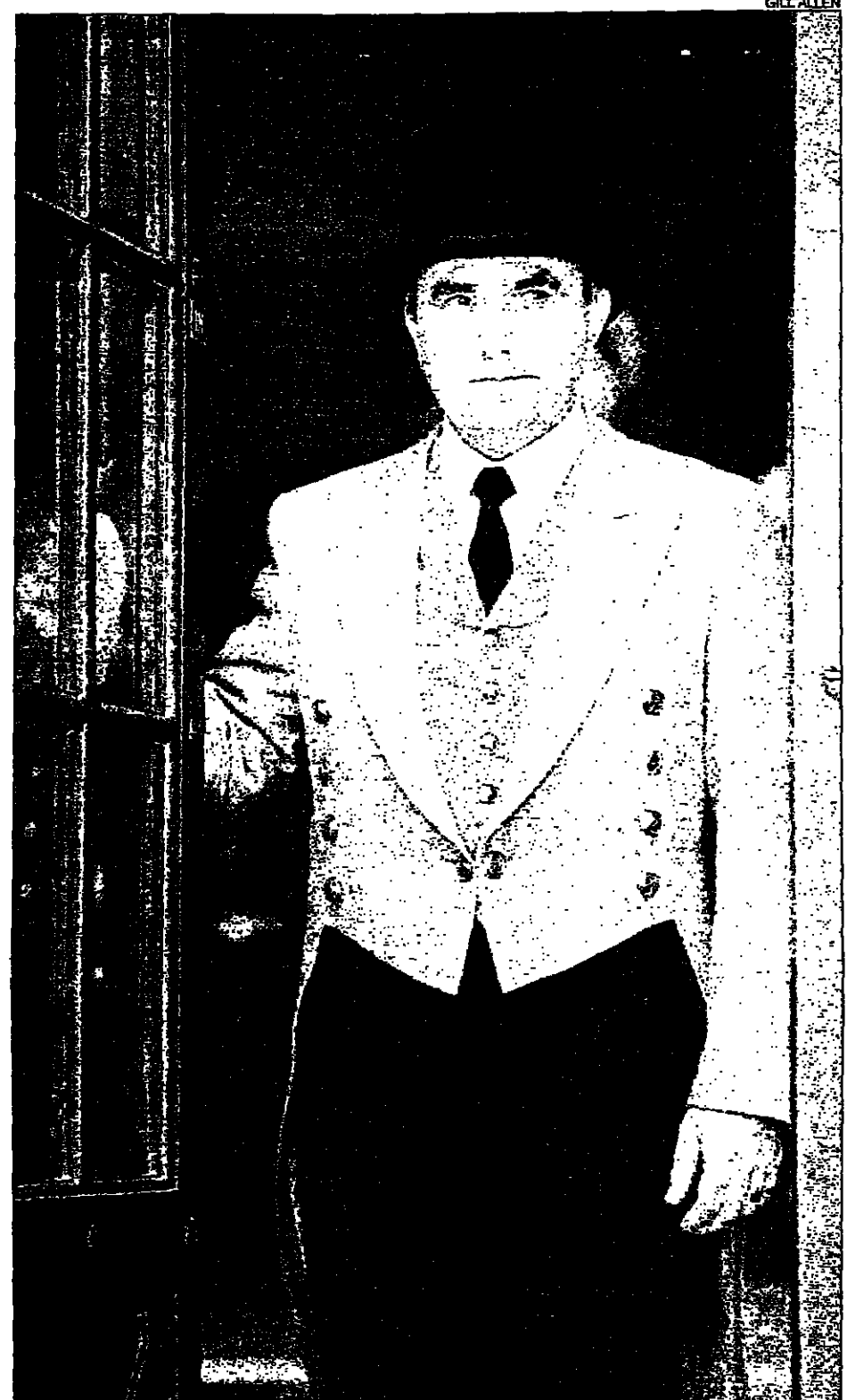
Under those terms the Bank would have to have the power to set inflation targets, which at the moment remains in the Chancellor's hands.

While the move was welcomed in the City, it was immediately attacked by Mr Brown's predecessor, Kenneth Clarke, who was constantly at odds with Mr George over whether rates needed to rise. He said they would now almost certainly go up.

"I wouldn't have made this interest rate rise for a start because nothing economically has changed since I last decided not to," Mr Clarke told BBC Radio 5 Live. Mr Brown had rushed to hand over responsibility.

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Opening the door to independence at the Bank of England yesterday

Lesson taught by Labour Down Under

By OLIVER AUGUST

LABOUR'S plan for the Bank of England was modelled on the reform of the New Zealand Reserve Bank which turned a chronically inflation-prone economy into one of the best managed in the world.

The central bank was granted independence by New Zealand's Labour Government in 1989 and Don Brash, the governor, was put on performance-related pay. His task is to keep inflation under 3 per cent to maintain his salary. If prices shoot up he could even lose his job.

Inflation was at 14 per cent when the reform was proposed and has stayed within the target range of zero to 2 per cent for most of the 1990s. Interest rates have been reduced.

As part of economic reforms that influenced the thinking of Tony Blair and his colleagues, Mr Brash was given a contract which sets targets for inflation and price stability.

Interest rates and other monetary matters are set by the central bank without interference but outside advisers from industry, finance and universities are consulted.

The sovereignty of parliament is preserved and the Government has the right to override the price stability objectives in an emergency. The independent Federal Reserve in America and the Bundesbank in Germany operate in federations with states having representatives on their boards. In 1989, George Blunden, then deputy governor of the Bank of England, said central bankers look at Mr Brash "not only with envy but also with awe".

PAYING FOR YOUR RANCE!

You're unknown, so why haven't you got a ministerial appointment?

Frontier talks

A British exemption from a frontier-free Europe emerged in outline during negotiations in Brussels yesterday for the revamped European Union treaty. Page 12

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Hague-Howard pact collapses

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND ANDREW PIERCE

WILLIAM HAGUE will enter the race for the Tory leadership today after pulling out of a pact with Michael Howard under which he would have run as the former Home Secretary's deputy.

The former Welsh Secretary will announce his challenge after abandoning a deal in which he would have campaigned with Mr Howard on a "dream ticket". His move provoked acrimony at the top of the party only four days after John Major stood down.

The two men were reported by Mr Howard's friends to have sealed an agreement over a glass of champagne late on Monday night. Arrangements had even been made for them to appear together at a press conference yesterday, it was said.

Mr Hague's supporters saw it differently. They said that Mr Howard had misunderstood Mr Hague's position

and that the decision had never been final. Mr Hague, they said, had left scope for further discussion the next morning, when he did indeed tell Mr Howard that he was going to make his own challenge. It was clear last night, however, that Mr Hague regretted what had happened.

The former Home Secretary, who had hoped to have Mr Hague by his side, went ahead with his own leadership campaign launch at which he was backed by several senior MPs and former ministers.

While trying to concentrate on his pitch for the Tory top job, repeatedly promising that he would "lead from the front", Mr Howard said that he and Mr Hague had agreed a joint bid. "An agreement was reached with Mr Hague. He had second thoughts. He was perfectly entitled to have second thoughts," he said.

The dispute delighted the camps of two other rightwing candidates, John Redwood, who also made his pitch for

the crown yesterday, and Peter Lilley, whose team were claiming increasing support, including possibly that of Gillian Shephard. Stephen Dorrell is likely to enter the contest today.

Mr Hague's decision was an obvious blow to Mr Howard. The "dream ticket", combining the supporters of both men, would have been hard to stop. But Mr Howard had an impressive array of former



At odds: William Hague, left, and Michael Howard

ministers, including Francis Maude, David Maclean and David Davis, with him yesterday and his camp voiced confidence about the contest.

Mr Howard said the party must listen to the electorate. "We must make the changes required to modernise the party's campaigning, presentation and publicity." He put himself forward as the man who could again do battle with "his old sparring partner".

Mr Redwood said his two years on the back benches after his last challenge gave him the advantage because he would not have to defend old policies. "The others will have to explain how they stayed there defending those policies to the bitter end," he said and he insisted that he wanted to keep the Conservative Party as a "broad church".

He added: "The problem is that we don't have enough worshippers at the moment. We have to find a lot more and we won't do that by only having one issue and one theme."

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Drunk driver facing execution over women's death

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

FOR the first time in America a man may be executed for drunk driving.

Thomas Jones, 39, has been convicted of first degree murder over the death of two 19-year-old women students, who died when his car ploughed into theirs last year while he was high on painkillers and beer.

A jury in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was yesterday deciding if he

should be sentenced to death. The case, the clearest illustration yet of America's growing intolerance of drunk driving, is being watched closely throughout the country.

Similar cases are pending in other parts of North Carolina and Kentucky. "People who drive drunk and recklessly can kill people just as much as they can kill them with a gun or a knife," Vincent Rabil, the assistant district attorney, said.

Jones had been taking various painkillers for more than 16 years since he lost part of his left leg in a lawn-mower accident. Arrested on three other occasions, he has been convicted twice on charges of driving while unfit to do so. In the third case, still pending, he almost hit a deputy sheriff's car after taking pills with beer chasers.

Jones apologised in court to the students' parents and said he was "sorry somebody had to die". The two

families do not want him to suffer the death penalty but hope instead that he will be sentenced to life imprisonment without parole.

Defence lawyers, capital punishment experts and law professors have all denounced the pursuit of the death penalty in such cases. They said the draconian sentence would open the way to capital prosecutions for crimes traditionally not seen as severe enough to warrant execution.

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Brown will have to stick to his guns after flying start

NOTHING that Gordon Brown is likely to do as Chancellor will have as much lasting importance as his decision to make the Bank of England operationally responsible for setting interest rates.

At a stroke, Mr Brown has removed one of past Labour governments' main areas of vulnerability, the doubts of City markets about their commitment to low inflation. However, as Eddie George, the Bank Governor, noted, monetary and fiscal policy have to be compatible, so Mr Brown will have to deliver on his pledge to be tough on spending and borrowing.

Tony Blair was only partly exaggerating when he claimed it was

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

"the biggest decision in economic policy making since the War". It certainly puts into perspective the Lilliputian manoeuvres of the Tory leadership contenders.

In a delightful irony, the decision was criticised by Kenneth Clarke for being likely to produce "higher monetary policy" than otherwise and was praised by Norman Lamont for promising "sound money". Labour governments have often been criticised by the Left for ending up — usually after financial crises — as the bankers' friends. But the Blair Government has started

from this position and given itself greater freedom to manoeuvre.

It was very much Mr Brown's initiative, nurtured over the past two years, and builds on Mr Clarke's decision to make monetary policy more open. Labour's statements in opposition had been ambiguous on timing, partly, it now looks, to avoid pre-election criticism. Mr Brown was persuaded of the need to act now by the pre-election differences between Mr Clarke and the Bank and by discussions in Washington. Mr Blair accepted the case a couple of months ago, while

the two other members of the "big four" (John Prescott and Robin Cook) agreed on Sunday evening. The rest of the Cabinet was consulted yesterday morning, though this hardly gave time for anyone to object.

The decision has enormous constitutional implications. The traditional objection has been that giving the Bank responsibility for interest rates undermines accountability to Parliament. As Mr Clarke said yesterday: "It won't be good enough for him to turn round and say, 'It's not my responsibility any more, gov. I've handed over control to this committee. You must go and complain to them if they get it wrong'."

Mr Brown's response is that the Bank will operate within economic objectives and, in particular, an inflation target that is set by the Government.

The new monetary policy committee will be largely nominated by the Chancellor, though to be credible its members will have, in Mr Brown's phrase, to be "recognised experts". The discussions, and any votes, will be made public. The Bank will also report "on an enhanced basis" to the Treasury Select Committee, which recommended similar arrangements to those that are now being adopted.

The only bigger decision that Mr Brown might make is to recom-

mend entry into a single currency, though he repeated that it was "highly unlikely" that Britain would join in a first wave in 1999. Yesterday's decision leaves open either option. It removes control of interest rates from politicians, though further legislation would be required on the Bank's status before entry into monetary union. Operational independence for the Bank will, however, reassure the markets, which might have become unsettled ahead of a decision on monetary union.

Mr Brown has got off to a flying start as Chancellor.

PETER RIDDELL
ADRIAN SHEPARD

Reform drafted on the last lap of election victory

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE letter to Eddie George outlining Gordon Brown's plans to give the Bank of England independence over interest rates was drafted in a London hotel on a laptop computer 36 hours before Labour won the election.

Gordon Brown and Ed Balls, his economic adviser, put the final touches to the proposals on Mr Balls' computer last Wednesday as the polls suggested that Labour was heading for a landslide victory.

The idea had been conceived two years earlier when Mr Balls, then aged 28, presented a paper to Tony Blair and Mr Brown suggesting the Bank should set interest rates.

On Friday, Mr Brown moved swiftly. Within hours of celebrating Labour's win at the Festival Hall and being appointed Chancellor, Mr Brown went to the Treasury. He told Terry Burns, the Permanent Secretary, of his plans and showed him the draft letter to the Governor.

That announced bluntness: "The Government intends to give the Bank of England operational responsibility for setting interest rates. The Government plans to provide in the Queen's Speech for legislation to amend the Bank of England Act 1946."

Mr Burns' officials worked overnight and through the weekend to get the necessary paperwork together to announce the most sweeping reform of the Bank of England for 300 years. Mr Brown and his advisers spent the weekend combing the Treasury books, to assess the real state of the nation's finances.

By Sunday the Chancellor realised that "corrective action" had to be taken immed-

ately to stop inflation breaching the Government's target of 2.5 per cent. Government sources said yesterday that it looked as if inflation was heading for nearer 4 per cent by the end of next year. He decided then that the changes to allow the Bank of England to set interest rates should be announced at once.

On Sunday night, Mr Brown went to see the Prime Minister at his home in Islington. Mr Brown and Mr Blair consulted John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Robin Cook, the Foreign Sec-

retary, by telephone and then agreed that the announcement should be made on Tuesday.

On Monday the Chancellor asked Mr George to a meeting at the Treasury at 9am the following morning. Mr George had no prior knowledge of the impending bombshell. Although Mr Brown and Mr Blair had discussed reforms of the Bank of England on several occasions with Mr George over the last two months, the Governor had no idea of the speed with which the Chancellor would act.

He was told that the planned monthly meeting be-

Early bird
Gordon Brown has established a cracking pace at the Treasury, arriving for work by 7am. Meetings start as early as 7.30am and he met Eddie George yesterday at 8am. Kenneth Clarke, his predecessor, usually met Mr George in the afternoon or late morning but would normally be in the office before 8.30am.

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On Monday the Chancellor asked Mr George to a meeting at the Treasury at 9am the following morning. Mr George had no prior knowledge of the impending bombshell. Although Mr Brown and Mr Blair had discussed reforms of the Bank of England on several occasions with Mr George over the last two months, the Governor had no idea of the speed with which the Chancellor would act.

He was told that the planned monthly meeting be-

tween the Chancellor and Mr George would take place as usual but be brought forward one day, to Tuesday May 6, to agree any interest rate changes. Mr Brown wanted to be seen as the Iron Chancellor prepared to take tough "corrective" action. From then on the Bank of England would be given the freedom to set interest rates. Mr George was sworn to secrecy.

At 8am yesterday morning the Press Association and other news wires were told only that the meeting with Eddie George had been brought forward. Speculation abounded about an interest rate rise. At the same time other Cabinet members were phoned to be told about the impending announcement and Mr Cook and Mr Prescott saw Mr Blair at Downing Street.

Reporters were then "locked in" at the Treasury until 11am, when Mr Brown declared that interest rates would go up by 0.25 per cent and that he intended to make the Bank of England independent with immediate effect.

The plan had been plotted for over four years. In 1993 Gordon Brown presented a policy document, *A New Economic Approach*, to the party conference which suggested that the Bank of England should be reformed to make it more representative and accountable. In the spring of 1995 Ed Balls drafted his paper for Mr Blair and Mr Brown going one step further and suggesting that the Bank should have operational responsibility for interest rates.

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In the driving seat: Eddie George leaving the Treasury after his meeting with the Chancellor yesterday

City waits to give its final verdict on Chancellor's sweeping reforms

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE City will give a final verdict on Gordon Brown's sweeping reforms when the names of the members of the new monetary policy committee and the second deputy-governor are disclosed in the next few days.

Some critics have expressed concern that the new posts might attract only second-rate economists or political appointees although they are broadly in favour of the shake-up of monetary policy.

Gavin Davies, chief international economist at Goldman Sachs, is the hot tip for the new position of second deputy. Mr Davies, a former member of the Treasury's Panel of Independent Economic Advisers, refused to comment yesterday on speculation but is a strong supporter of the new set-up. He is



Gavin Davies tipped as the second deputy

respected in the City for his pragmatic approach to the economy.

Mr Davies, 46, has been linked with the Labour Party since he served in the policy unit at No 10 in the dying days of the Callaghan government, while Sue Nye, his wife, is

head of Mr Brown's office. It is expected that he would also be a strong candidate for Governor when Eddie George's contract runs out in a year's time. But Mr Davies will face stiff competition from his namesake Howard Davies, the former head of the CBI, who has three years on his contract as deputy-governor to run.

The monetary policy committee is expected to be staffed with City and academic economists. Bridget Rosewell, director of Business Strategies and another former member of Mr Clarke's panel, would bring strong business and regional expertise having previously worked for the CBI. If Mr Brown fears that the Bank maintains too hawkish an attitude towards inflation he could turn to Roger Bootle, head of economics at HSBC, who is the author of a book on

the death of inflation. Andrew Sentance, director of the centre for economic forecasting at the London Business School, has also won respect for his pragmatic approach to monetary policy.

But, there is concern that Labour will have trouble attracting highly paid City economists — even if City-style salaries are to be paid by the Bank.

Some candidates might also feel the job description too limiting, although Gavin Davies said yesterday that with the monetary policy committee taking direct responsibility there should be no shortage of takers for the new posts.

Academics may be more attracted to the post as it would leave open the chance of carrying on with non-conflicting work such as theoretical research and lecturing.

Staff at GCHQ set to rejoin unions

Half the workforce at GCHQ, the Government's signals intelligence centre, is expected to re-apply for membership of a national trade union, following an expected announcement by the Labour Government next week that the ban on unions is to be lifted.

Union membership at the eavesdropping centre at Cheltenham, in Gloucestershire, was banned by the Conservatives in 1984. Its reinstatement will be one of the first policy decisions implemented by Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary. Following discussions held by Mr Cook, officials at the intelligence centre are expecting certain safeguards from the Government to guarantee that operations will be uninterrupted. It is not clear yet whether that will amount to a no-strike deal.

School that failed may be revived
Hackney Downs School for Boys, in east London, which was shut 18 months ago after a "hit squad" of government-appointed experts said standards were so low it could not be saved, may be revived as a mixed comprehensive for 600 pupils.

Hackney council, faced with a shortage of school places from the year 2000, last night considered a £4 million plan to reopen the school.

Immunisation cash plea

Compensation for children suffering permanent damage through immunisation must be raised substantially above the current £30,000 maximum award, the British Medical Association said. Launching a campaign to persuade parents to have children immunised, Dr Simon Fradd praised the success of vaccines and said that the one-in-a-million risk to a child of severe, permanent disability was worth taking.

Sharp rise in drugs bill for old

One in ten elderly patients is admitted to hospital because of adverse reactions to drugs and many still take prescriptions that are no longer suitable, a report for the Royal College of Physicians claims. The medicine bill for the elderly accounted for 45 per cent of the £2.25 billion rise between 1985 and 1995. Total prescriptions for them rose from 125 million to 194 million over the same period.

Prince welcomed in Belfast

The Prince of Wales received a rapturous welcome in Belfast when he flew in for a gala concert, featuring Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, to mark the opening of the Waterfront Hall. Hundreds of people cheered and waved Union flags as the Prince went on a walkabout in the loyalist Village area of Belfast. He visited the Windsor Women's Centre in the Village area, which was fire-bombed by loyalists last year.

Spain extradites 'supergrass'

A supergrass who says he is owed £1 million in reward money was arrested by Spanish drugs investigators working with British Customs against an international cannabis ring. In 1992 Brian Charrington, then a Middlesbrough car dealer, escaped a £250 million cocaine trafficking charge by Customs after police intervened. Last night plans were underway for his extradition to Britain.

The 300-year-old lady who has seen it all

By JON ASHWORTH

WITH its pink-coated footmen and marble halls, the Bank of England belongs to another era. Visitors are led through hushed corridors, with the occasional glimpse of the central courtyard where the Governor is inclined to take the air. Electronic screens provide the only tangible link with the fast-paced world of financial trading.

The Bank was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1694 with the immediate aim of raising funds to allow the Government to wage war in the Low Countries.

It did the same during the Napoleonic Wars a century later, by which time it had developed into the nation's largest and most prestigious financial institution. Dubbed "The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street", and privately owned until 1946, when

it was nationalised, the Bank came to the fore in the 19th century, when it gradually assumed the responsibilities of a central bank.

It was recognised as the central note-issuing authority under the Bank Charter Act of 1844, and embraced the roles of lender of last resort and guardian of the nation's gold reserves. "Safe as the Bank of England" swiftly entered the vernacular.

Safe, perhaps, but not immune from strife. One of the Bank's most excruciating moments came in March 1995, when the then deputy governor, Rupert Pennant-Rea, resigned in the wake of kiss-and-tell disclosures by a former mistress.

Bank insiders still refer to the "scene of the crime" — supposedly marked in chalk in a dressing room used by



Old Lady of Threadneedle Street: early cartoon

Eddie George. Inevitable references to the "Bank of England" were swift.

Howard Davies, who succeeded Mr Pennant-Rea, found himself in a room where concierges are called footmen, and rooms are

known as parlours. In an interview last October, he said: "It might be slightly odd that when you come to a meeting to discuss monetary policy, there is a man with a pink coat who's making sure everybody's there, and tea and

coffee come in silver things." This, he was swift to add, in no way implied that the Bank was out of touch with the times. This was the thrust last December, when an all-party committee of MPs laid into the Bank over its handling of the Barings debacle. The MPs attacked its failure to coordinate the regulation of Barings, and said there was a question of "too many cooks". They described the Bank as a "cheerleader for the City", and suggested that it was too close to the institutions it is called on to regulate.

The Bank reshuffled its senior management shortly afterwards, handing responsibility for overall financial structure to Alastair Clark, a lifelong Bank of England employee. Peter Rodgers, a financial journalist, was brought in to head the press office — a role once reputedly offered to Lawrence of Arabia.

Continued from page 1

bility for monetary policy to the Governor of the Bank of England and his committees, he said.

"I think he has made a mistake. Obviously in the national interest I trust they get it right. What you are going to see, undoubtedly, is tighter monetary policy than you might otherwise have got from a perfectly responsible Chancellor of the Exchequer who is prepared to take the broadest possible view of what is in the interests of British industry and commerce and the people who work in it."

Norman Lamont, however, congratulated Mr Brown. "This should have been done long ago. He deserves credit for this early brave move. The people of this country are entitled to sound money," the former Conservative Chancellor said. "Interest rates should not be in the hands of politi-

cians who are subject of all kinds of pressures. The credibility of policy will be increased by this move. It is a good day."

The move was also welcomed by the CBI, which said it would enhance the credibility of British monetary policy and lower the cost of finance for industry, and by Stephen Alambritis of the Federation of Small Businesses, who said the Bank was better placed than politicians to gauge business needs.

The City remained concerned, however, about the mini-Budget expected in July, and about Mr Brown's ability to meet the spending targets inherited from Mr Clarke.

Mr George said that yesterday's interest rate rise was essential to keep a check on the economy and he expressed hopes that the new Chancellor would also take a tough line on taxation.

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UK BANKS AND BUILDING SOCIETIES

Boxing champion inflicted fearful damage on guest, court told



Benn: denies assault

By RICHARD DUCZ

THE former world boxing champion, Nigel Benn, inflicted such "fearful damage" to a fellow nightclub guest by hitting him in the face with a glass ashtray that his victim believed he was going to die, a court was told yesterday.

Raymond Sullivan, 33, needed 105 stitches in his nose after he was allegedly attacked without provocation by Benn in a West End nightclub last September. Paul Dodgson, for the prosecution, told Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court: "Mr Sullivan heard the sound of

breaking glass and the next thing he knew was a crunching pain to the front of his face.

"It seems that it was caused by a fist wielding something like an ashtray.

"Mr Sullivan fell to the floor and felt as if he was drowning. He was on the floor on his knees and all he could feel was excruciating pain to his face. He felt he was going to die. He didn't see who it was who had done this to him."

Each time the victim tried to struggle to his knees, he was allegedly kicked back down by the ex-super middleweight titleholder,

who was described by one witness as looking "really angry" and "gritting his teeth" during the assault.

Mr Dodgson said that witnesses at Legends Nightclub then saw Mr Benn kick Mr Sullivan, 33, leaving his legs black and blue, before he was pulled away by bouncers in Legends nightclub in Mayfair. The boxer allegedly ran off into the night.

The jury was shown photographs of the injuries which were taken by the surgeon who operated on Mr Sullivan at University College Hospital to repair internal and external

damage to his nose. Mr Sullivan, a ticket agent who knew Mr Benn, was likely to be scarred for life.

The court was told Mr Benn and Mr Sullivan had been sitting at different tables in what is known as the VIP area of the nightclub when for some reason the boxer attacked Mr Sullivan.

Mr Dodgson told the jury of four women and eight men that Mr Sullivan, a regular customer at the club, had been drinking in his VIP area and had had about three vodkas and oranges when he saw some friends outside trying to get in. He went to the door to help

them. As he did so, he passed Mr Benn, who was seated at a nearby table. Although they knew each other, not a word passed between them. The next thing he knew was a crunching pain to the front of his face, and it seems from other witnesses that that crunching pain was caused by a fist wielding something like an ashtray in it."

"Mr Sullivan fell to the floor. He felt like he was drowning. He couldn't seem to breathe. He tried to get up but all he could recollect was being knocked back down. "He couldn't see anything. All he

could feel was the excruciating pain. He thought wrongly but perhaps understandably that he was going to die."

Mr Sullivan was led to the kitchen area of the nightclub, his face streaming with blood, and he believed he had been blinded in the attack.

Mr Benn, also 33, of Beckenham, Kent, denies wounding Mr Sullivan last September with intent to do him grievous bodily harm. He also pleads, not guilty to a lesser, alternative allegation of unlawful wounding.

The trial continues today.

Attack 'halted by kick' from woman, 75, who was inspiration for Bond secretary

How Miss Money Penny brought a mugger to heel

By JOANNA BAILE

THE woman who was the inspiration for Ian Fleming's Miss Money Penny demonstrated an old-fashioned move in self-defence when she was confronted by a mugger as she tried to get out of her car, a court was told yesterday. The robbery came to a swift end after a well-aimed kick with a high-heeled shoe.

Victoire, Lady Ridsdale, was an assistant to the James Bond author in intelligence during the war. In the Bond spy novels, Miss Money Penny was the long-time secretary to the security chief M, and James Bond's verbal sparring partner.

Now 75, Lady Ridsdale was with her husband, Sir Julian, 81, a former Conservative MP, when they were ambushed by two men as they arrived at their home in The Boltons, Kensington, after an evening out.

She told Southwark Crown Court: "I put my hand up to get out of the car and the first thing I knew was that my watch had been snatched off. He was right on top of me standing over me. He said: 'Just make it easy for me or I'll

hurt you'. The next thing he was pulling at my rings on my wedding finger. They are very tight. I can't get them off myself." Banging her hand down on the witness box, she added: "That was just too much for me. As I had a good pair of solid high heels on, I kicked out, thank goodness."

Asked by Robin Griffith, for the prosecution, if she made contact, she replied: "Yes, I think so. He pulled back then. I kicked him in the groin and he doubled up in pain."

Counsel told the jury: "She may be of retirement age, but she was not prepared to submit to the indignity without response. She leant back, raised her right leg and kicked the intruder in a place where it appeared to hurt."

She said that after she kicked her attacker, her disabled husband and his assistant, Peter Bennett, who had also been in the car, began calling out for their grandson, Rupert, who lived near by. The robbers, worried by the commotion, fled.

Two men arrested minutes later by uniformed police deny conspiracy to rob on January



Sir Julian Ridsdale: "It's her Irish blood"

25. They are Christopher Wynter, 18, unemployed, of West Hampstead, north London, and David Stephenson, an office junior, of Alexandra Palace, north London, who is alleged to have attacked Lady Ridsdale.

Miss Ridsdale told the court: "I did not see enough of the man to identify him. He was fairly stocky and wearing a crash helmet with a visor. She said she still suffered pain from the attack, during which her gold watch was stolen. A gold watch was found discarded near by.

"My shoulder and arm hurt

afterwards. My shoulder still does. My watch had gone before I was even aware of it. It is an unusual piece. I don't know how much it is worth."

Sir Julian, who walks with the aid of a stick, was MP for Harwich for 38 years. He said he had been powerless to help his wife because he was unable to get out of the car. He told the court: "I don't know if it's her Irish blood, but when she is attacked, she attacks back. She opened the door and kicked out at him very hard."

"He grabbed my wife's finger and was trying to pull off her rings. It is very unpleasant when you can't do anything. He uttered threats to both of us. He wanted us to be quiet and just let him get on with stealing my wife's rings and he assumed. We had to take action to frighten him." The trial continues.

□ The family have had brushes with crime in the past. In 1964, Sir Julian and his daughter, Penelope, traded punches with two men who tried to rob them in the street outside their Kensington home. They sold their country home in Essex in 1988 after five break-ins.



Lady Ridsdale yesterday. She said: "I had a good pair of solid high heels on"

Scientist is jailed for abducting daughter

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A SCOTTISH scientist was jailed for six months by a Norwegian court yesterday after he admitted abducting his four-year-old daughter during a dispute with her mother over visiting rights.

Dr Mark Burkitt, 34, a prominent bio-chemist and cancer research specialist based in Aberdeen, will only serve a month in jail as four months of the sentence were suspended and he has already spent 31 days in custody.

He pleaded guilty on Monday to abducting the child, Emma, from his former wife's home in Grimstad, southern Norway, during an access visit in February this year.

He used his ex-wife's car to drive his daughter to Oslo airport and flew with her to Amsterdam and Germany, sparking an international search. Last month he gave himself up in Berlin.

Bjorg Knutsson, 29, his former wife, was granted custody of Emma at Aberdeen Sheriff Court two years ago, but the couple have continued to argue over visiting rights. Dr Burkitt said he took his daughter to call attention to the unfairness of his access rights and to highlight the plight of fathers everywhere.

WPC threatened to kill her chief, sex bias case told

By A STAFF REPORTER

A WOMAN police officer threatened to murder her chief constable and to recruit thugs to break the legs of another senior colleague, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

WPC Kay Kellaway allegedly made the threats to a friend after her case for sexual discrimination was adjourned part-heard earlier this year.

She had claimed that promotion had been blocked by male officers, that one had called her a "whore", "bitch" and "slag", and that another had said that she was "taking jobs from the boys" when promoted to acting sergeant.

Siobhan Walsh, 30, herself a former police officer, yesterday told the resumed hearing at Reading, Berkshire, that WPC Kellaway had made the threats last month in a telephone call to her.

"She said to me she was going to kill the chief constable. She kept repeating this. She said she had been to the village where he lives and there were only 15 houses. I felt I should inform the Thames Valley Police so they could prevent Kay from doing anything against the chief constable. Kay was saying the chief constable had ruined her life."

Miss Walsh said that WPC Kellaway also threatened to recruit friends of her boyfriend to break the legs of



Kellaway: claimed promotion blocked

Detective Superintendent Peter Hanks, who is alleged to have written offensive reports on her personal file.

Miss Walsh, who left the Metropolitan force in December 1995 for medical reasons after withdrawing a claim of sexual harassment, said she had supported WPC Kellaway in her action for 17 months until April this year. She added that "WPC Kellaway had said no one would be safe at the hearing 'because she was taking the knife and she would use it'."

After the hearing was adjourned yesterday, Thames Valley Police said it was aware of the alleged threats. "We remain concerned for Miss Kellaway's health and deeply regret that matters have reached this stage."

Safety fears as galley prepares for Atlantic trip

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A REPLICA 15th-century Hebridean galley powered by oars and a single square sail is to defy the advice of marine experts by recreating a 1,200-mile Viking voyage across the north Atlantic.

The 40ft open wooden vessel is expected to encounter ice floes and stormy seas on its journey from Inverness to Cape Farewell on the southern tip of Greenland when it sets sail this month.

In 1992 the *Aileach* caused a major sea rescue after its rudder smashed in high seas 60 miles west of Orkney on a voyage to the Faeroe Isles. One of its crew was knocked unconscious and it had to be towed into Strom Ness by a lifeboat.

Yesterday Nick Parker, 45, a language lecturer at Bangor University who has organised the voyage, said he was confident the galley was "as safe as any other boat". It had all the necessary safety, communication and modern navigational equipment to cope with emergencies.

The Maritime Safety Agency in Aberdeen expressed serious reservations about the trip and said it would be inspecting the vessel this week to see whether safety constraints could be imposed on the ground that the voyage was commercial.

Pay protest that sank an admiral

By DAREK GREGORIAN

A RETIRED Rear Admiral was dismissed as harbourmaster because of his "inappropriate" behaviour, an industrial tribunal ruled yesterday. Admiral Tim England, 55, had refused to hand over accounts to Hampshire County Council when he was refused a £6,000 pay rise.

The Admiral served on HMS *Invisible* in the Falklands with Prince Andrew before he took the job of harbourmaster on the River Hamble, Hampshire, which he said was "small beer" compared to his naval responsibilities. He left his £60,000 a year naval position for the £30,000 harbourmaster job to spend more time with his wife and two children. But he

angered managers after requesting to close the harbour office two days a week because of understaffing.

The tribunal was told that the harbour authority chairman Patrick Allan told the Admiral not to treat the job "like the Battle of the Nile."

After refusing to supply end-of-year accounts, he was dismissed last June over an "irretrievable breakdown in working relationships." The Admiral claimed unfair dismissal on health and safety grounds, but the Southampton tribunal chairman Neil Jenkinson said: "The Admiral had behaved in a manner which it was reasonable of his employer to conclude was totally inappropriate."

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THE ENERGY TO BREAK THROUGH

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Saturday in THE TIMES

You can take the actor out of Yorkshire, but you can't take the Yorkshire out of Sean Bean

Rachel Campbell-Johnston meets the new Count Vronsky in the Magazine

BBC wasn't young enough, says head lured to Channel 4

By CAROL MIDDLEY, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL JACKSON, the BBC1 chief chosen to succeed Michael Grade as the chief executive of Channel 4, yesterday accused his former employer of neglecting women, the young, and viewers outside southern England.

Mr Jackson, 39, who is still tipped as a future Director-General of the BBC, said that a failure to cater properly for large chunks of the population was one of its biggest weaknesses. At Channel 4, he said, he wanted to encourage talent and innovation, and would defend "programmes that are rude, as long as they are good shows". He also indicated that he was willing to sacrifice popular but expensive US shows such as *Friends* and *ER* if the price became too high.

The son of a Cheshire baker, Mr Jackson takes up his new job next month on a reported salary of £300,000. He said: "One of the areas where BBC TV is weak is in talking to

women as opposed to men, talking to young people, and talking to people outside the South of England."

These were strengths he would nurture at Channel 4, he said. "They are to do with the relationship with an audience that trusts Channel 4, which knows the channel is on its side."

He confirmed he was not interested in poaching from the BBC: "I am leaving the splendid quarters of White City behind me. I am interested in talking to people here."

He acknowledged that shows such as *Friends* and *ER* were hugely successful. Channel 5's director of programmes Dawn Airey has declared she is keen to buy them, but they are contracted to Channel 4 until 2000. Mr Jackson said: "There is a price over which it would be foolish to pay for a programme that you don't control and isn't feeding back into British production. At the

end of the day, the channel will be remembered for what it puts back into British production and the talent it has encouraged." He would defend its reputation for controversial programmes. It has been criticised by the Independent Television Commission for offending public taste with shows such as *Brookside*, which included an incest plotline.

The relationship with television watchdogs should be "one of candid self-criticism," he said. "If you have got something wrong, hold your hands up and admit it."

If there is something that you passionately believe in, then defend it. I think the channel has a good record of doing that in the past."

Mr Jackson said he had not left the BBC in protest at its changes. "I am supportive of the changes that have taken place. I did have a great job — it was a real wrench to leave.



Michael Jackson, right, with the Channel 4 chairman Sir Michael Bishop

But this is the best job in British broadcasting."

A BBC spokesman said of Mr Jackson's criticisms: "We are a little puzzled, because BBC1 has the best audience profile of any channel. *East-Enders* alone demonstrates that the BBC gets a great deal right in respect of women and

young people. BBC2 has trounced Channel 4 in the ratings for two years, and we are seeking to reinforce its strengths by appealing to young people and women."

There was no news on John Willis, Channel 4's director of programmes, who in the past has called Jackson a "copycat

villain" and was badly tipped to get the chief executive's job. Mr Willis is on holiday this week, and some staff believe he may leave, but Mr Jackson paid tribute to his talent and said he was looking forward to working with him.

Media, pages 22-23

NEWS IN BRIEF

McAliskey too sick to attend court

Roisin McAliskey, whose extradition is being sought by Germany in connection with a mortar attack in Osnabrück, was too ill to be brought to court yesterday for a hearing.

Miss McAliskey, 25, who is expecting a baby this month, and is being held in Holloway prison, was said by her lawyer, Gareth Peirce, to be using a wheelchair. Ronald Bartle, the chief stipendiary magistrate at Bow Street, remanded her in custody for another 28 days but asked for a detailed medical report. He said the note from the prison stated merely that she was tired and uncomfortable. Ms Peirce said that Miss McAliskey could only sleep sitting up and that her legs were painful. She is also suffering from an infection.

Suspect dies

A fencing teacher sought by police over allegations that he had indecently assaulted pupils at Brentwood School, Essex, was found dead in his car at Brighton. Gareth Stafford-Bull, 41, went missing from his home on April 14.

Holiday boy safe

A Dutch boy who vanished on a family holiday in London on Monday was found at Dover. Cornelius Jansen, 12, had a note saying "Please get me home", thought to have been written by his brother Mario, 15, who is still missing.

Minced stake

A butcher ground up £840 when he switched on a mincer. Bert Moore, 70, of Moretonhampstead, South Devon, did not know his son Barry, 36, had hidden the takings there. They spent hours piecing notes together.

RAF's cow slip

The Defence Ministry has paid a Carmarthenshire farmer £8,500 for the death of a cow frightened by a low-flying Tornado. The Holstein Friesian, which died from abortion complications, had taken generations to breed.

Cones amnesty

West Midlands Police is offering a month's amnesty for students at Wolverhampton University who are believed to have stolen more than 100 yellow traffic cones as souvenirs. The force is running low on the £3.50 cones.

ITV loses its drama hitmaker

ITV's Network Director is to stand down in the autumn after five years at its helm. Marcus Plautin, 51, who made drama the cornerstone of his programming, said he wanted "a change of pace and direction".

Under his leadership, ITV introduced quality dramas such as *Prime Suspect*, *Heartbeat* and *Cracker*, and extra weekly episodes of *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*, to keep hold of its traditional lion's share of audiences from a more competitive BBC and increasing new channels. The Independent Television Commission has criticised ITV for an "aging and cautious" schedule too heavily dependent on drama and lacking in diversity.

Mr Plautin told the ITV board of his intentions last year. It is understood he has made no firm decisions about his future. He said: "I will leave the channel in good shape, with its peak-time share up year on year."

Hunt for drugs to ease Parkinson's

MEDICAL BRIEFING

ANTHONY SARGEANT, who died recently after suffering from severe Parkinson's disease, took as keen an interest in his own condition, it is said, as he did in tank technology during the war, when he was scientific adviser to Montgomery. He later became Chief Scientific Adviser to the Home Office.

Most doctors enjoy treating well-informed patients, particularly when they are able to display scientific detachment.

Research by Dr. Walther Birkmayer, an Austrian, led to the introduction in the 1960s of the use of levodopa (Sinetar, Madopar) to restore the biochemical balance of the chemical messengers dopamine and acetylcholine by reinforcing the inadequate amounts of natural dopamine produced by patients with Parkinson's.

Levodopa is a precursor of dopamine, which is changed in the brain to it. The lack of dopamine is the cause of the abnormalities in muscle control: slow, stiff movements; the tremor and the lack of facial expression that characterise Parkinson's. After a variable number of years, levodopa becomes less efficient.

Since the 1960s, research has continued in the hope that new drugs might be found that would either supplement

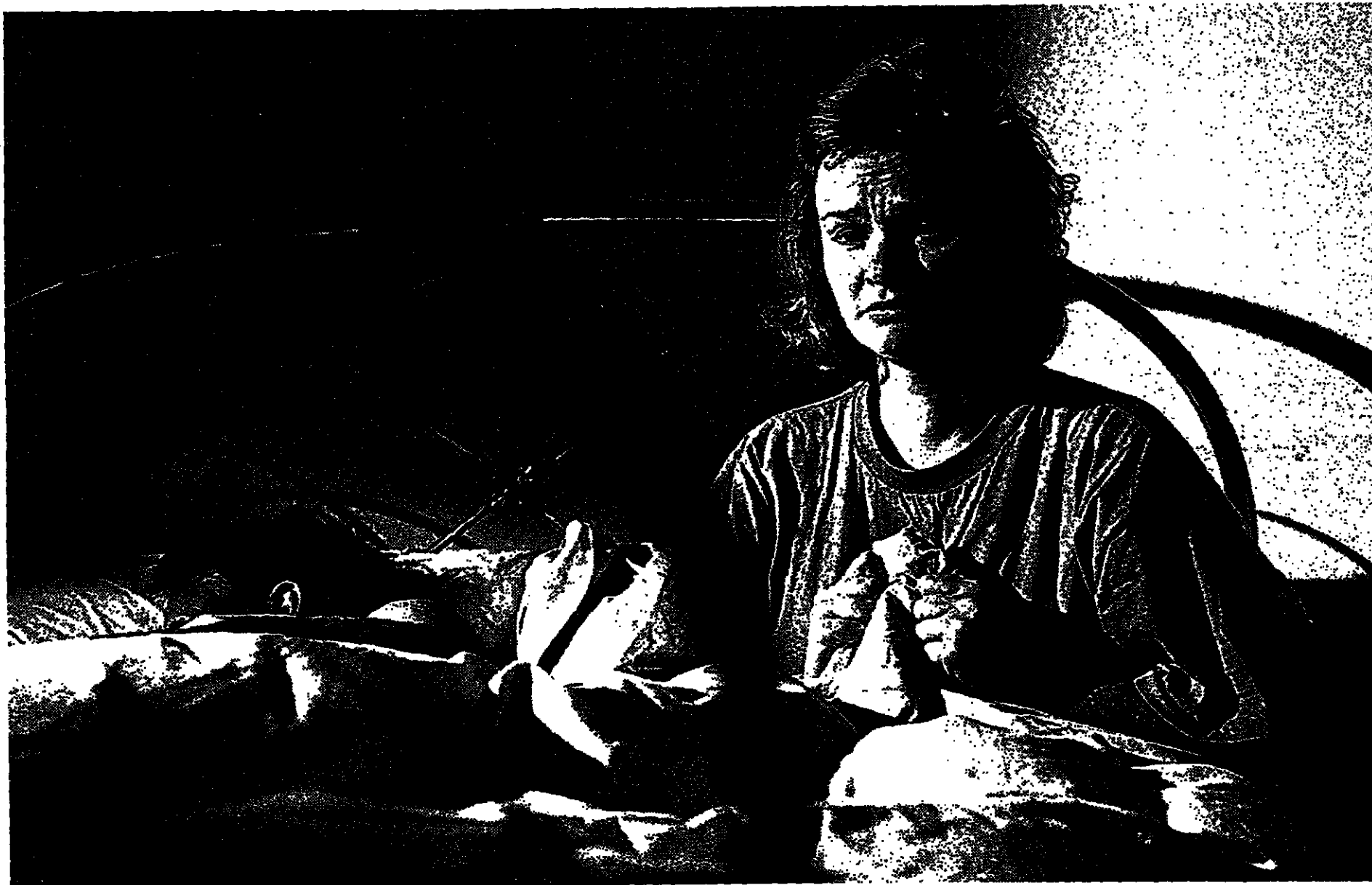
or enhance the action of levodopa. Some like selegiline are thought to prevent the breakdown of dopamine, thereby prolonging the action of levodopa. But its present status in the treatment of Parkinson's is now being reassessed.

Other drugs, bromocriptine, lisuride, and pergolide, stimulate the dopamine receptors in those parts of the brain that react to them, therefore increasing the effect of any circulating dopamine. An alternative to increasing the effect of the dopamine is to decrease the action of the chemical messenger, acetylcholine.

Parkinson's still cannot be cured. The search for a surgical "reset" has proved unrewarding. Medical treatment has, however, improved in the past 50 years, and this together with better physical therapies has improved the quality of life for patients.

Not all patients have Mr Sargeant's scientific background, but all patients with Parkinson's disease deserve to have a careful assessment from an expert so that the treatment may be tailored to their individual needs.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD



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Wildlife study blames pesticides as dozen varieties decline by up to 89 pc in 25 years

Birds perish as farmers 'drench fields in poison'

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

PESTICIDES are almost certainly the chief cause of a sharp decline in at least 12 varieties of farmland birds over the past 25 years, according to a report yesterday.

The five-year study, commissioned by the Department of the Environment from a consortium of wildlife bodies, calls for reduced use of chemicals and other changes in agricultural practice to improve the habitat for birds that nest and feed on farms.

Launching the report in London, Julian Pettifer, the broadcaster and conservation-

ist, said it was hardly surprising that birds were declining when the countryside was being "drenched in poison". In many places the dawn chorus of birdsong was now more like "a barber's shop quartet", if it could be heard at all.

Grahame Wynne, a director of conservation at the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, said: "We need to look at a range of reforms, including a tax on pesticide use and wholesale changes in the way farming is subsidised."

The report finds that pesticides "cannot be ruled out as a

major factor" in the decline of tree sparrows (down 89 per cent), turtle doves (77 per cent), bullfinches (76), song thrushes (73), lapwings (62), reed buntings (61), skylarks (58), linnets (52), swallows (43), blackbirds (42) and starlings (29). Mark Avery, head of research at the RSPB, said: "We believe there is good circumstantial evidence for a link between pesticides and the decline in these birds."

The authors of the report admit they have definite proof of the role of pesticides only in the case of grey partridges, which have declined by 82 per cent. A 30-year study by the Game Conservancy Trust on the South Downs in Sussex, has shown clearly how pesticides have reduced the food supply of partridge chicks.

During the first 21 days of life, the chicks need a nutrient-rich diet of beetles, caterpillars, sawflies and other insects. Pesticides deal the birds a double blow by killing the insects directly and destroying the broad-leaved weeds on which they live.

One solution pioneered by the trust is the creation of "conservation headlands", sward-wide strips at the edge of arable fields where spray-



In decline, clockwise from top: blackbird (down 42 per cent), reed bunting (61), tree sparrow (89) and skylark (58)

ing is kept to a minimum. Farms using this method have restored partridge chick survival to the level that existed before the widespread use of pesticides.

Other birds which may owe their decline in part to in-

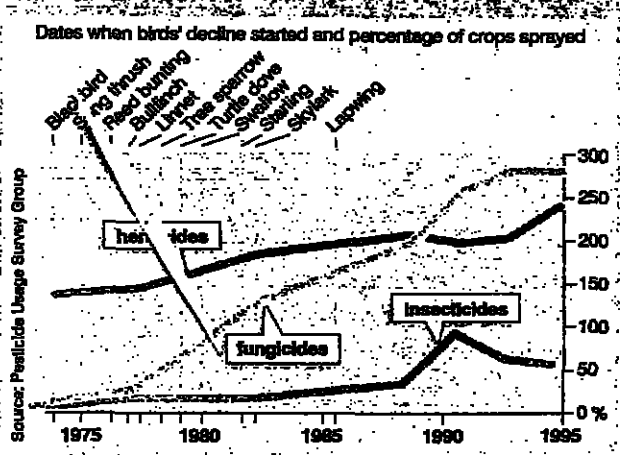
creased pesticide use are the corn bunting (down 80 per cent), spotted flycatcher (73), mistle thrush (39), yellow wagtail (31), duncock (29) and yellow hammer (17).

Herbicides and fungicides, rather than insecticides, are

identified as the main threat. By the 1990s all arable fields were being sprayed on average up to three times a year, compared with no more than annually 20 years earlier.

At least ten million birds are killed on the roads each

year, according to a report in *British Wildlife*. The house sparrow is the most common victim, followed by the blackbird, song thrush, pheasant and chaffinch. Hedge-lined country roads take the worst toll.



Forecasters promise more snow as schools and roads are shut

BY DAREK GREGORIAN

SNOW, sleet and gales battered most of Britain yesterday, shutting schools and stranding 45 day-trippers on a remote island overnight. Forecasters predicted that the cold spell, coming immediately after the hot start to the month, would continue at least until the weekend, with much of the country expecting rain and snow.

Michael Dukes of the Press

Association Weather Centre said: "It is not going to be quite so cold, but it will still be pretty chilly. There will be blizzards and wind-chill factors down as low as -10C in the north Scottish hills." Maximum day temperatures would range from 3C in northern Scotland to 11C on the south coast of England.

For the first time in 14 years, large areas of North Wales woke up to a thick blanket of May snow yesterday, with the low-lying Vale of

Clwyd in Denbighshire particularly hard hit. Six inches of snow was reported in villages around Ruthin and falls closed two schools in St Asaph.

One lane of the A55 North Wales Expressway, the main artery into the region, was closed early in the morning as snowploughs battled to keep traffic moving. In South Wales, snow fell along the A465 Head of the Valleys road.

The high winds stranded the day-

trippers on the seabird haven of Skomer Island, off the Pembrokeshire coast. The pleasure boat that had gone to pick them up on Monday was damaged by stormy seas and had to be towed away from rocks by a lifeboat.

Mike Reynolds, of the trip organisers Dale Sailing, said: "Fortunately, holiday chalets were available, so they had beds and blankets and food and could keep warm." They were returned to the

mainland yesterday. The wintry weather, which broke out on the day Co-op stores announced they were halving prices on suntan lotions, was caused by a cold front from the Arctic that blew away the warm air that had covered much of the country for the previous few days.

Temperatures plunged overnight to -5C at Loch Glascarnoch, in the Highlands, and high ground in northern Britain experienced sleet

or snow showers. There were warnings from the AA of black ice in the Borders and Dumfries and Galloway in southern Scotland.

London recorded 12mm of rain yesterday, more than for all of March and April. The wet weather, accompanied by a cold snap with night frosts, is expected to continue at least until Friday, said the London Weather Centre.

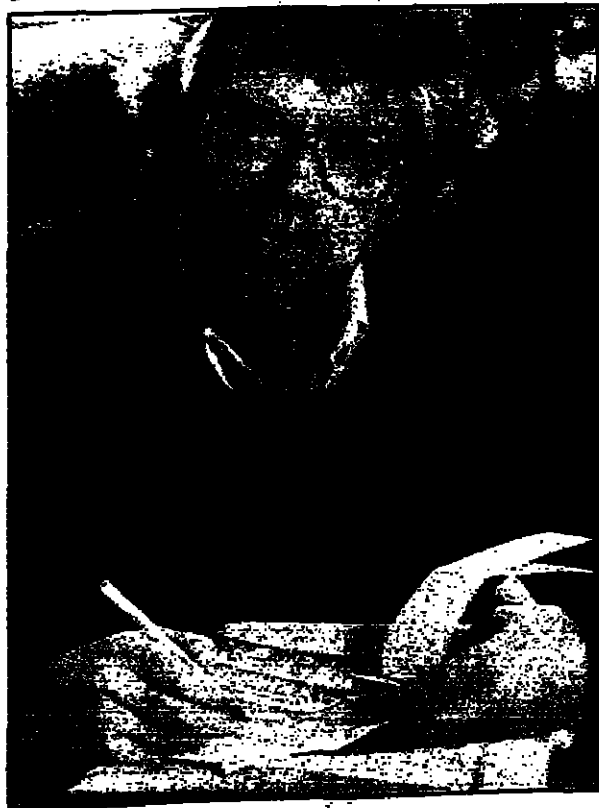
Forecast, page 24

Anthony Burstow

No action is to be taken by police against Anthony Burstow, who was reported on September 3, 1996, to be under investigation for attempting to contact from Bullingdon prison a woman he had been convicted of inflicting psychological grievous bodily harm to by stalking. He did not attempt to write to the woman, nor was any letter intercepted or found in his possession.

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Transatlantic novels take four of six places on £30,000 prize shortlist



Novels and novelists: Margaret Atwood (Canada), Deirdre Madden (Britain), Jane Mendelsohn (US), Anne Michaels (Canada), E. Annie Proulx (US), and Manda Scott (Britain)

Women's talent for fiction goes west

BY ERICA WAGNER, LITERARY EDITOR

FOUR out of the six novels on the shortlist for the Orange Prize for Fiction, Britain's most lucrative literary prize, are by North American writers, reviving the debate over the state of British fiction.

The Orange prize, worth £30,000, was first awarded in 1996 to the British novelist Helen Dunmore for *A Spell of Winter*. Last year, debate focused on the merits, or otherwise, of a prize open only to women.

Now the co-founder of the prize, the novelist Kate Mosse, noting that 60 per cent of publishers' entries for the prize were North American, hopes the

publication of the shortlist will encourage debate about the state of publishing in Britain. "You could speculate about the prevalence of North American writing on some publishers' lists, and wonder how much respect some British publishers have for British writing," she said.

Novels by the British novelists Jeanette Winterson (*Gut Symmetries*) and Beryl Bainbridge (*Every Man for Himself*), both strong contenders on the Orange long list released in March, have been dropped in favour of novels by Canadian writers — *Alias Grace* by Margaret Atwood, and *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels — and by Americans — *Accordion Crimes* by E. Annie

Proulx, and *I Was Amelia Earhart* by Jane Mendelsohn. Mendelsohn and Michaels are first-time novelists. Deirdre Madden (*One by One in the Darkness*) from Northern Ireland, and Manda Scott (*Hent's Teeth*), who is Scottish, make up the British contingent on the list.

Lisa Jardine, the author and critic who is chairman of this year's judges, said that part of the reason for such a strong North American showing was the strong tradition of women's writing there. "For 30 years writing has been taught in colleges over there; there tends to be much less self-consciousness. I was very struck by the confidence, and maturity of North

American writing — a kind of 'look ma, no hands' bravura." But Dan Franklin of Cape, the publishing company that produced Jane Mendelsohn's novel, denies that there is a bias among publishers towards North American writing. "When I see a manuscript, I certainly don't think 'Oh, how wonderful, that's American!'"

Franklin agrees that school leavers can produce very polished first novels. "But do they develop as interestingly as, say, A. L. Kennedy or Barbara Anderson? The shortlist says as much about the tastes of the judges as about publishers' tastes."



Lisa Jardine: struck by North American style
Leading article, page 19

Historians lose battle to save War of the Roses site from housebuilders

BY TIM JONES

GASTONS FIELD, the site of the Lancastrians' defeat in the Wars of the Roses in 1471, is to have housing built on it. Tewkesbury Borough Council decided yesterday.

The decision to grant planning permission outraged English Heritage. Tewkesbury Town Council and members of the Battlefields Trust, who condemned it as "an act of civic vandalism". The Government will now decide whether to endorse the permission or hold a public inquiry.

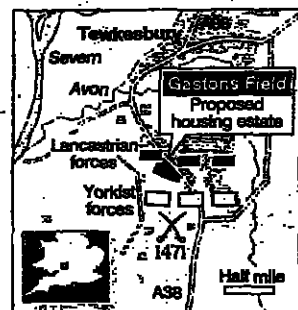
A spokeswoman for English Heritage said: "We remain vehemently opposed to this proposal. They have taken their decision in spite of our exhortation to preserve this precious site."

Joe Kent, the borough council leader, infuriated some

historians when he claimed that there was no evidence that the area where the houses could be built had been part of the battlefield. The Gastons is now a clipped, gently rising Gloucestershire meadow under sight of Tewkesbury Abbey. On May 4, 1471, it was the scene of dreadful carnage.

Margaret of Anjou, the wife of the deposed Lancastrian Henry VI, had landed at Portland with an army from France intent on wresting the Crown back from the upstart Yorkist Edward IV and freeing her husband from Edward's custody.

Exhausted by their march, the Lancastrians turned to face their pursuers outside Tewkesbury Abbey. To the south was ranged the Yorkist army under Edward, his brother Richard (later Rich-



ard III) and the Duke of Clarence. From the beginning the battle went badly for the forces of Anjou.

The Duke of Somerset, commanding the Lancastrian right, led his men towards the Severn in a flanking move to get out of range of the Yorkist archers, but encountered spearmen concealed in the woods of what is now Tewkesbury golf course. As he desperately attempted to regain

his lines, the duke's men were cut down in the field which is known still as Bloody Meadow.

The defenders broke ranks and fled, many of them to what they thought was the sanctuary of the abbey. There they were slaughtered until the abbot begged that the killing should cease.

Defeat at Tewkesbury spelled the end of Lancastrian hopes of regaining the throne. Henry VI was put to death in the Tower; Somerset was executed; and Margaret escaped only to be captured and held prisoner for four years.

Much of the battlefield has already been used for housing, a cemetery and a sewage works. A spokesman for Bryant Homes Merca said that they had undertaken to provide a car park and other amenities for the rest of the battlefield.

Volcanoes may damage ozone

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

VOLCANOES might be doing more damage to the ozone layer than man-made pollution, a scientist said yesterday. It has been argued that the build-up of artificial chemicals, during the 20th century has led to the thinning of the layer, which protects the Earth from the Sun's ultra-violet rays. Many countries are phasing out the substances, such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which are found in aerosols and other products.

But John Smellie, a volcanologist of the British Antarctic Survey, believes that volcanoes might be expelling ozone-depleting chemicals in much larger quantities than those derived from man-made sources. "Dr Smellie agreed that action was needed to curb man-made pollution. But often we ignore what the planet

is doing itself." Volcanoes had been around for far longer than man-made noxious compounds, he said. "It may be a war we are seeing in the atmosphere and the ozone layer is a casualty effect."

The impact of volcanoes on global warming is already known. Rising temperatures were offset when the gases and particles expelled in the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, in the Philippines, in 1991, led to a cooling of 0.5 degrees C.

Dr Smellie's studies are focusing on the South Sandwich Islands of the South Atlantic, including Bellingshausen Island. There, two continental plates are colliding, creating volcanoes, with huge quantities of steam and gases. His work could confirm that active volcanoes are producing ozone-damaging chemicals.

Royal website beats Spice Girls for hits

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

THE Queen's Internet website has proved so popular that it has overtaken even the Spice Girls to become one of the world's most visited sites.

Since its introduction by the Queen on March 6, the 165-page website has been accessed 12.5 million times, or 6.25 million per month, compared with the 2.5 million "hits" a month on the all-girl band's site. More than a million accesses were made on the royal pages in the first 24 hours, it was revealed yesterday.

The site was extended yesterday with an extra 85 pages of royal history, profiles and

speeches, illustrated by pictures from the Royal Collection. By tapping in <http://www.royal.gov.uk> computer users around the world can now tour some of Buckingham Palace and receive news of royal visits.

National curriculum history advisers have collaborated with the Palace to write the text, from the Anglo-Saxon kings to George VI. A Palace spokesman said: "Americans are the most frequent visitors, but we have interest from all over the world. The Queen is very pleased."

□ The Times on the Internet: <http://www.the-times.co.uk>

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'Conservative Party is a broad church. We won't find more worshippers by having only one theme'

Redwood plays down Eurosceptic record

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

JOHN REDWOOD launched his campaign for the Tory crown yesterday with a promise that his leadership would not be bogged down by the European issue and that he would restore trust in the Conservatives over schools and the health service.

The Eurosceptic, who resigned as Welsh Secretary in 1995 to challenge John Major for the party leadership, said yesterday that he did not want to lead a factional party which was obsessed by one issue. The general election result had shown that people were deeply concerned about standards in schools, he said, acknowledging that the Tory government had closed too many small hospitals. It had broken or ignored the bond that existed between communities and their hospitals.

Speaking at a central London hotel, surrounded by some of the ten MPs who will run his campaign, he said that the Conservatives had to be united. Mr Redwood, challenged over reports that Conservative Central Office was briefing journalists against him, replied: "I would urge all Conservatives to realise that

whoever wins this leadership election has a task to bring the party back together again.

"It is not going to be easier for me if there has been too much factional infighting and personality briefing over the course of the campaign. I will not be doing it and I am asking my colleagues not to do it on my behalf.

"It will not help for people to be making foolish or negative comments about each other in the leadership challenge. I would urge all other candidates to be sensible in this respect." He said that the Tory party would have to use "every bit" of the talent left to it in Parliament by the election. The defeated Tory MPs would return quite quickly, "when the Conservative Party has reconciled with its roots and learnt the lessons of 1992 to 1997".

On policy on the European single currency, he said: "I will talk to my colleagues about how we can best oppose the Labour Government. Kenneth Clarke [also a Tory leadership candidate] and I are united on many aspects of the single currency. We both agree that a fudged single

currency would be extremely damaging to Britain and the rest of Europe."

Mr Redwood went out of his way to praise Mr Major, particularly his handling of the economy since 1992, when Britain had been bundled out of the exchange-rate mechanism.

Asked about the absence yesterday of some of the arch-Eurosceptics, such as Teresa Gorman, who turned out to back him when he declared for the leadership two years ago, Mr Redwood said: "I am not ashamed of the fact that they supported me then and I hope those who are still MPs will support me now. But I do want a broad appeal. The Conservative Party is a broad church. It must stay as a broad church."

"The problem is that we don't have enough worshippers at the moment. We have to find a lot more and we won't do that by having only one issue and one theme."

He emphasised that, unlike other leadership contenders, he could stand across the dispatch box from Tony Blair and not have to defend every last deed of the previous Tory Government.



New profile: Mr Redwood announces he is in the leadership race

The challenge that means never having to say sorry

The Vulcan versus the Klingon. Mission launches by John Redwood and Michael Howard are observed by Alan Hamilton

The Vulcan wears his hair a little longer these days, so you can no longer see his ears.

John Redwood, the Mr Spock of the 1995 Tory leadership election, must retain at least one superhuman brain cell, given that when he threw his hat into the ring at a press conference yesterday, he did not repeat the disastrous mistakes of his last attempt to seize the helm of the Starship Conservative, currently adrift in a distant galaxy somewhere near Folkestone.

Trekkies still speak in awe of Mr Redwood's last bid to grab control from John Major, when he hired the rather grand Jubilee Room off Westminster Hall and surrounded himself with the Swivel-Eyed Teendancy, an inter-galactic band of Eurosceptics including Tony Marlow, in a striped blazer, and Teresa Gorman just being herself.

When it was over, men in white coats guided them out. Yesterday Mr Redwood moved down to the discreet basement room of a hotel near Victoria Station. Thirty journalists filled the small room. Mr Redwood and his five supporters squeezed round a table in the corner. The contender has fine chiselled features and the dark good looks of a Celt, but his supporters still have that well-fed look.

So, Mr Redwood, now that the Captain James T. Kirk of British politics is in Downing Street, what role is there for a Vulcan? Mr Redwood, conscious of the hilarity engendered by his last bid to take over the bridge, did not much care for the analogy. "I don't think a Vulcan is on offer," he said, smiling weakly.

He presented himself not so much as Mr Spock as Mr Clean, a man who, were he to lead the Tory party, would never have to apologise for its mistakes of the past five years. Challenging John Major means never having to say sorry. He was, he said, the man to tackle Tony Blair.

The party, he admitted, should show humility for its past mistakes. Well, the party with the exception of Mr Redwood, he was the man who put up rather than shut up, the man who saw last Thursday's tremor coming as long ago as 1992. Fine, Mr Redwood, but

what about the sleaze? "I can't promise you that in the future there will never be a promiscuous Tory," he declared, adding moments later that the trouble with the past five years of Conservative politics was that there had been no fun. Heavens, Mr Redwood, where have you been?

If Mr Redwood is a Vulcan, Michael Howard must be the arch enemy from another galaxy, a Klingon. Mr Howard is an alien from east Kent, where right-wing Tories hang on to their seats and where there is probably zero gravity. Yesterday he launched his own space mission aimed at the Tory leadership.

His pad was the "institution of civil engineers", a veritable Cape Canaveral of political ambition, where Mr Blair launched the brilliantly successful Labour manifesto mission to the stars and Martin Bell fired his one-man rocket to photograph the dark side of Neil Hamilton.

Mr Howard mounted the rostrum in front of a portrait of Thomas Telford, the father of private-sector funding for motorway construction and pioneer of pay-as-you-drive. For Mr Howard, there was none of Mr Redwood's sackcloth and ashes approach, no handwringing or apologies for five years of Tory misrule.

"I have a clear sense of purpose. I have driven forward imaginative, successful and popular policies. The measures I introduced have worked. I am not easily sidetracked. I will lead from the front. I have remained loyal to the government."

Strong stuff for a man fuelled by nothing more than half a glass of Ballygowan Irish mineral water.

But hold on, Mr Howard. With the departure of Mr Portillo, are you not the principal surviving hate figure?

He directed the question back to the Planet Folkestone. "Look at the election result in my constituency," he retorted, a touch smugly.

While the purser and the boatswain battle for the helm of this Starship Tory, the fight may be yet to the cabin boy. We await the declaration of intent from William Hague, who is just about tall enough to read the compass.

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Night the champagne deal fell flat

Hague accused of reneging by Howard camp

By Andrew Pierce and Philip Webster

STRICT secrecy surrounded the late-night meeting between William Hague and Michael Howard as they sipped champagne and thrashed out a deal over the leadership of the Conservative Party. But the deal fell flat.

The former Home Secretary had believed he was on the point of clinching Mr Hague's agreement to stand as his deputy in a "dream ticket" that Conservative MPs might have found irresistible. In the three days since John Major had stood down, the two men had spoken on the telephone several times about combining forces and taking on the other right-wing contenders, Peter Lilley and John Redwood.

Only a handful of the two former Cabinet colleagues' closest aides knew they were due to meet at 10pm to complete the deal at the Howards' heavily fortified Belgrave house and favour house on Bank Holiday Monday.

Mr Hague, 36, was accompanied to South Eaton Place by Ffion Jenkins, his 27-year-old fiancée. He was warmly greeted by Mr Howard and his wife Sandra. The only other person in the terrace house was the veteran Eurosceptic MP Sir Michael Spicer, who is running Mr Howard's campaign.

There were no other witnesses to the hour-long meeting that has electrified the Tory leadership contest and caused a bitter rift in the camps of two men, who have been friends for some time.

Within an hour of Mr Hague arriving, the former Home Secretary had cracked open a bottle of Bollinger to celebrate what he regarded as an historic deal that he hoped would result in him winning the leadership of the Tory Party.

According to Mr Howard's people, Mr Hague, having agreed to stand down, would become deputy leader and

party chairman if Mr Howard won. However, if the deal was done, as the Howard camp maintains, Mr Hague went back on it.

Mr Hague has privately admitted to friends that he went along with Mr Howard's proposal at that meeting. But he did not believe he was giving his final assent and felt that there was scope for more discussion.

When he went home that night, his answering machine was full of calls from friends, senior and junior, pleading with him to stand in his own right. Not all of them knew he was close to a deal.

He spoke to many of them, and Ms Jenkins ventured her own opinion that he could take the chance that had presented itself.

The Hague team dismissed comparisons with the "Catherine Place conspiracy", the name given to the meeting of senior ministers who plotted Margaret Thatcher's downfall after the first inconclusive leadership ballot in 1990.

"There was no treachery over champagne," one Hague supporter said. "But William admits there was a terrible misunderstanding over the extent to which a deal was struck. But he is sorry if Michael is upset and accepts the blame, if blame is being apportioned."

At 8 am yesterday, after a sleepless night, Mr Hague called Mr Howard and told him he had changed his mind. Mr Howard was deeply disappointed and tried to bring him round. But there was no going back this time.

It had all seemed so different the previous night. Early in the day the mood had been sombre. The Howards were facing up to the brutal reality of life on the Opposition benches. The last trappings of government office, the front door keys, were being handed over the next day to Mo



Michael Howard, with his wife Sandra, arriving at the press conference to announce he would stand alone

Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary and the new mistress of the house. The suitcases were packed.

However, spirits soared throughout the day as Mr Howard, 55, became convinced that a deal would be struck. The champagne had been on ice since an extended mid-afternoon telephone call with Mr Hague, who was in his Yorkshire constituency. It was during that call, friends of Mr Howard say, that Mr Hague agreed in principle not to let his name go forward.

There had been a series of telephone conversations dating back to Saturday, when Mr Howard initiated the contact. But even before Mr Hague spoke to Mr Howard on Monday afternoon it ap-

peared, according to his friends, that he had weakened in his resolve to fight.

Despite the pressure from some of his closest friends, such as Alan Duncan and Nigel Evans, who will run his leadership campaign, Mr Howard was tempted to be the number two. "Remember, he is getting married soon," one Hague supporter said. "He is deeply in love — he is realising that there other things in life."

The atmosphere was warm and convivial when Mr Howard and his fiancée arrived. Mr Howard felt emboldened to take the champagne out of the fridge and toast their pact. But they never shook hands on it.

The two men were friends. Mr Howard has made little

secret of the fact he sees Mr Hague, the young pretender, as a future Tory leader. But not the next one. Mr Hague is equally effusive about Mr Howard's tough line in Cabinet against the government's wait-and-see policy on the single currency.

"It was the dream ticket," a Howard aide said. "We were convinced we had got them signed up before he arrived. What is clear is that Mr Howard, when he went to bed, thought the deal was done."

He claimed yesterday, through his supporters, that it would have been announced at a joint press conference yesterday afternoon. Peter Lilley and John Redwood, the other candidates of the Right, might have been eclipsed. But

it never worked out. Far from being chastened, they were both delighted at the mud-slinging between their principal rival camps.

Mr Howard carried on yesterday with his launch. His friends claimed that Mr Hague's departure was no more than a hiccup. "This is a winning ticket, and always has been," one said. "The chance of having William on board popped up — now it's gone. But we are still in with a very good chance."

Sir Michael Spicer, witness to the South Eaton Place champagne deal that turned flat, was adamant: "A settlement was made. This is all very unfortunate."

Letters, page 19

Now for the hard part — finding somewhere to sit

ALMOST 250 first-time MPs were yesterday trying to find their bearings, and some office space, in the Palace of Westminster.

For many, both tasks will prove considerably harder than getting elected. The building is labyrinthine, and until an office block under construction nearby has been completed there will not be enough rooms to go round.

To help out the newcomers, the Commons authorities had organised what was signposted as a "New Members"

Reception". Champagne and canapés were not on offer, but officials were dispensing advice on office accommodation, computer equipment and identity passes.

By lunchtime yesterday, Paul Burstow, the Liberal Democrat MP who unseated Lady Olga Maitland in Sutton and Cheam, was streets ahead of at least one of his new colleagues. He had been given a lightning tour by Simon Hughes, MP for Southwark North and Bermondsey, who has had since his 1983 by-election victory to

Polly Newton watches as Westminster's newcomers take their first faltering steps — and find they face a fresh fight for seats

learn the route. Jackie Ballard, the newly-elected Liberal Democrat MP for Taunton, had meanwhile visited the party's election campaign team across the road.

Mr Burstow said the Hughes induction had borne fruit. "He has been very helpful in showing us everything we need to know quickly, like where to get our stationery."

Mrs Ballard was impressed and not a little envious. "You've got stationery, have you?" It appeared that the achievement might be enough to qualify Mr Burstow as her mentor.

Mr Burstow acknowledged graciously that, in the circumstances, three hours' experience was not to be sneezed at. "You have to become an old hand very quickly."

Across the room, Angela Smith, the new Labour MP for Basildon, was writing down her preferred office location (the limited space on offer is available both in the House itself and in nearby buildings). She admitted that she did so more in hope than expectation. "I would trade off a small office for a central

location, but there must be almost no chance of a new girl getting an office in the House," she said.

The need for a corner somewhere that she could call her own was pressing, however. "I took 42 messages off the constituency office answerphone and I have nowhere to sit and get back to people."

Margaret Moran, the new Labour MP for Luton South, was taken aback by an encounter with a veteran Tory from the shires. "He said: 'Are you a new girl?' I thought this is going to stop now. Then he said: 'I would advise you to get a pad in London, rapido.' His parting shot? 'There are so many women...'"

Ms Moran, former leader of Lewisham council in south London, was mischievously making plans to cater for the doubling of the number of female MPs. "I keep wanting to say: 'show us the sword room so we can turn it into a creche.' She was also considering direct action to even out

the number of men's and women's lavatories with the aid of a screwdriver and a handful of new signs. "Otherwise we'll have to queue forever."

The advent of 247 new MPs — the highest number since 1945 — has left the Commons' doorkeepers and policemen with their work cut out. They must learn to identify the newcomers as quickly as possible.

Eddie McKay, who has worked as a doorkeeper in the building for nine years, said it would take him about three weeks. Like his colleagues, he has a book of their photographs, which he will study at work and at home until he is confident that he has them off pat. "I tend to put them into groups — Scots, ladies, knights, silver-haired ones. That's how I do it."

It was part of a doorkeeper's job, he said, to make MPs' working lives as painless as possible. "We like to think we have got a bit of a calming effect."

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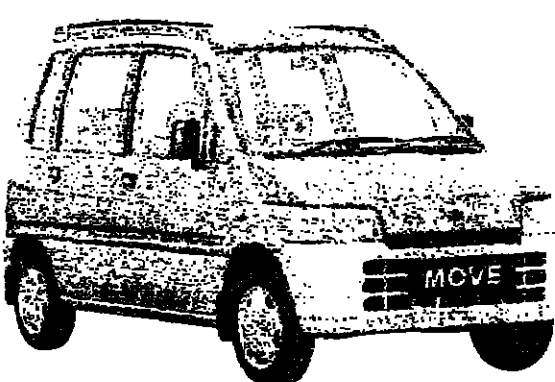


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Who does what in the Labour Government

THE Prime Minister made the final appointments to his ministerial team yesterday. The Times has set out below the various departmental posts and job descriptions. Some specific portfolios have still to be allocated.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT



Secretary of State David Blunkett — planning early education and employment Bill.

Minister of State (employment and disability rights): Andrew Smith. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Alan Howard — welfare to work programme, implementing social chapter, employment and benefits issues, competitiveness, work permits, regional and urban policy, disability and equal opportunities.

Minister of State (school standards): Stephen Byers. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Estelle Morris — responsible for literacy and numeracy initiatives, school funding, class sizes and the abolition of assisted places, league tables, national curriculum, teacher training and supply, nursery provision.

Minister of State (education and employment in the Lords): Baroness Blackstone. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Kim Howells — further and higher education, research, adult education, careers service, qualifications and examinations, training, establishing university for industry, new technologies.

In-tray: immediate action to implement welfare-to-work programme and implementing the Maastricht treaty's social chapter; short Bill to set in train the abolition of the Assisted Places Scheme. Urgent action, too, on nurseries to phase out the use of vouchers without stranding children now in playgroups or private nurseries. White Papers planned for June on the main commitments on education and employment, in preparation for a single Bill in the autumn. Dearing review of higher education reports in July, prompting likely abolition of student grants and further expansion of universities.

The Times looks at all of Tony Blair's new ministers and the job that lies ahead of them

TREASURY



Chancellor of the Exchequer: Gordon Brown.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury: Alistair Darling — control of departmental spending, conducting promised expenditure reviews.

Financial Secretary: Dawn Primorale — customs revenues and taxes.

Paymaster General: Geoffrey Robinson — Private Finance Initiative, privatisation issues, and welfare to work programme.

Economic Secretary: Helen Liddell — financial services, City regulatory work.

In-tray: writing Budget, probably to be held in June. Key decision will be to set the rate of windfall tax on privatised utilities.

Details of welfare-to-work measures will be tightened up. Plans to cut VAT on fuel from 5 per cent to 0 per cent. Creative thinking about how and when to raise taxes without breaking manifesto pledge not to raise basic and top rate of income tax for five years.

Drawing up legislation for Bank of England to gain new independence to set interest rates.

HOME OFFICE



Secretary of State: Jack Straw — security issues, terrorism, royal matters and public expenditure. Minister of State: Alan Michael — police, criminal policy, organised crime and voluntary sector. Minister of State: Joyce Quin —

prisons minister, oversight of immigration and asylum, particularly with EU, mentally disordered offenders and probation. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Mike O'Brien — immigration and nationality case work, race and community relations, passports, constitutional issues. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: George Howarth — prisons, fire service, liquor licensing, gaming and drugs. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Lord Williams of Mostyn, QC — all Home Office matters in the Lords, constitutional issues.

In-tray: Crime and Disorder Bill to be in the Queen's Speech to reform youth justice system including fast-track punishment for young offenders; new powers to deal with nuisance neighbours and anti-social behaviour; compulsory drug testing and treatment for serious drug-addicted offenders and curfew for children under 10 found roaming the streets. Audit of the Prison Service including accommodation and finances. To decide whether private sector will design, finance, construct and manage 12 new jails being planned. MPs to be given free vote on handgun ban. Consider confirming Major-General Guy Watkins as new chairman of the Tote and look for new chairman of Parole Board.

SOCIAL SECURITY



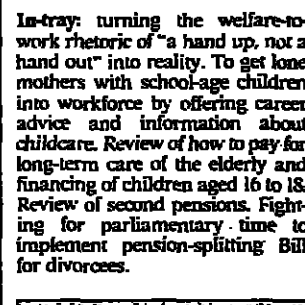
Secretary of State: John Prescott — transport, environment and regions. Minister of State: Michael Meacher — environmental protection, water, countryside, wildlife and habitats, health and safety. Cabinet Minister of Transport: Gavin Strang — transport.

Minister of State: Richard Caborn — regeneration and regional planning. Minister of State: Hilary Armstrong — housing and local government. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Angela Eagle — energy efficiency and British Waterways Board. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Baroness Hayman — transport and environment in the Lords. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Nick Raynsford — London and capital's environment. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Glenda Jackson — transport for London and other duties.

In-tray: tough decisions on how to deliver a 20 per cent cut in global warming emissions by 2010. Seeking ways of boosting uptake of solar power. Promises to curb car culture and boost public transport. To be paid for possibly by axing more of the road-building budget. But that will raise battles with freight and pro-roads lobby. Look

ing at ways of speeding clean-up of air pollution before 2005. Examining ways of merging London Tube and buses. New green taskforce of unemployed to clean up environment and save wildlife sites.

NORTHERN IRELAND



Secretary of State: Mo Mowlam — overall control of Northern Ireland Office.

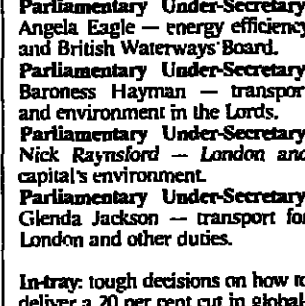
Minister of State: Paul Murphy — Stormont talks. Department of Finance and Personnel, Information Service, relations with EU and liaison on Scottish and Welsh devolution.

Minister of State: Adam Ingram — security, Department of Economic Development and co-operation between NI and the Republic. Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Tony Worthington — education, training and employment, health and social services and community relations.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Lord Dubs — environment and agriculture. All NI matters in House of Lords.

In-tray: inject life into the multiparty talks resuming at Stormont on June 3. Persuade Ulster Unionists and SDLP to reach agreement on disarmament of terrorists. Reduce high numbers of long term unemployed.

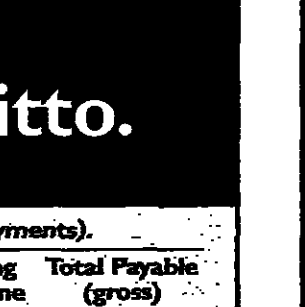
SCOTLAND



Secretary of State: Donald Dewar — entire portfolio of the Scottish Office. Minister of State: Henry McLeish — home affairs and devolution. Minister of State: Brian Wilson — education and industry. Minister for Local Government and Transport: Malcolm Chisholm — development department and Commons spokesman on agriculture, environment, fisheries and forestry matters. Minister for Health and the Arts: Sam Galbraith — health, social work, arts and sport. Minister for Agriculture, the Environment and Fisheries: Lord Sewell of Gilmour — Forestry Commission and Lords spokesman on Scottish Affairs.

In-tray: introduce devolution Bill for two-question referendum within weeks. Plebiscite on Scottish parliament by autumn. Getting young Scots back to work through scheme paid for by windfall tax on privatised utilities, reducing NHS waiting lists.

FOREIGN OFFICE



Secretary of State: Clare Short — overseas development, aid and pensions.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary: George Foulkes — to assist Ms Short.

In-tray: sorting out precise nature of the role with new responsibilities previously handled by the Department of Trade and Industry and by the Treasury.

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WALES



Secretary of State: Ron Davies — devolution, jobs, inward investment, environment, education, health, agriculture.

Parliamentary Under-Secretaries: Win Griffiths and Peter Hain — responsibilities to be announced.

In-tray: White Paper on devolution to be ready by July. A lot of work surrounding Labour MPs to back assembly. Will try to take over Home Office matters for Wales.

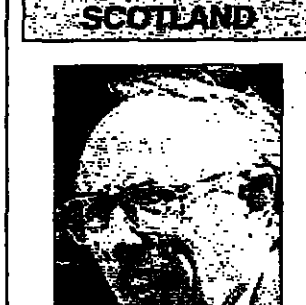
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Getting young unemployed into jobs and community work. Seeking more inward investment to the more remote parts of Wales. Improve road system between North and South Wales.

Raise the profile of Cardiff-Wales airport. Safeguard cottage hospitals.

Precise division of responsibilities being worked out.

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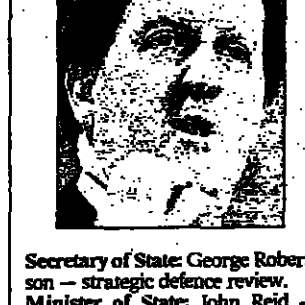
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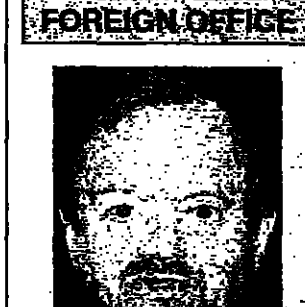


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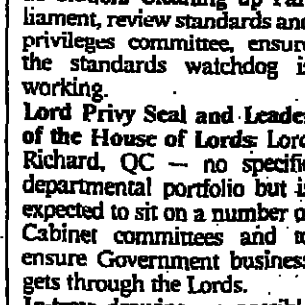
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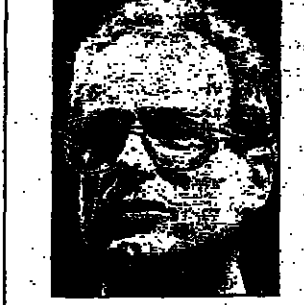
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AGRICULTURE



Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food: Jack Cunningham — overall responsibility for all aspects of policy.

Minister of State: Jeffrey Rooker — food safety, animal health.

Minister for Farming and the Food Industries: Lord Donoughue — ministry's representative in House of Lords, reform of European Union common agricultural policy.

Parliamentary Secretary: Elliot Morley — fisheries, countryside.

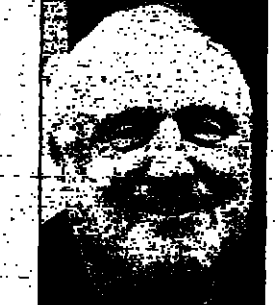
In-tray: setting up new independent Food Standards Agency. Early shake-up of the ministry, involving name and structure changes to reflect new emphasis on food and consumer interests.

Will work with Foreign Secretary at European Union summit in June to seek solution to problem of "quota-hopping" foreign fishing vessels.

Make "fresh start" on getting beef ban eased by "positive dialogue" with EU. Will go to Brussels on Monday to meet senior Commission officials.

Longer-term goal is reform of EU's common agricultural policy.

DEFENCE



Secretary of State: Frank Dobson. Ministers of State: Tessa Jowell, expected to take responsibility for improving public health. Alan Milburn, expected to spearhead efforts to cut red tape. Baroness Jay, responsibilities to be announced.

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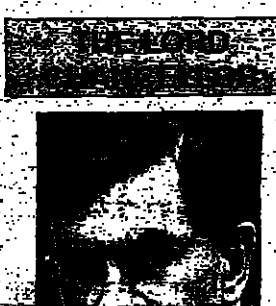
In-tray: co-ordination of public health services to counter food scares like E-coli/bacteria infection and to control dangerous environmental pollution.

Sorting out National Health Service funding in time to head off threatened winter crisis. Eliminating unpopular and expensive bureaucracy of the internal market.

Boosting morale among doctors to prevent GP shortage caused by low recruitment and increasing early retirement. Stopping brain drain of medical academics. Controlling tobacco advertising and sponsorship.

Helping to run with social services, royal commission being set up to review care of the elderly.

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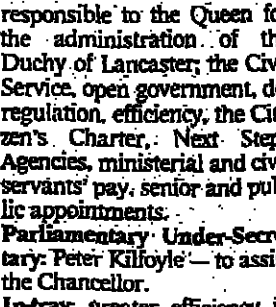
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Helping to run with social services, royal commission being set up to review care of the elderly.

DEFENCE



Secretary of State: Frank Dobson. Ministers of State: Tessa Jowell, expected to take responsibility for improving public health. Alan Milburn, expected to spearhead efforts to cut red tape. Baroness Jay, responsibilities to be announced.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary: Paul Boateng

In-tray: co-ordination of public health services to counter food scares like E-coli/bacteria infection and to control dangerous environmental pollution.

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Blair tells incoming MPs to stick to new Labour line

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR

Prime Minister's first address to his Government will be captured on film

TONY BLAIR will today lay down the law to Labour's massive contingent of MPs, warning them that the party's landslide victory does not mean there can be any let-up in discipline or departure from the manifesto.

The victorious Parliamentary Labour Party is to meet in Church House, Westminster, a venue chosen because it is big enough to take all 418 Labour MPs and because for the first time in recent memory cameras are to be allowed in to

capture Mr Blair's address. But although a buoyant Mr Blair, excited by his first days in office, will congratulate them warmly on their success, his underlying message will be that the party can never take public support for granted and that it must govern precisely in the way it promised.

The huge triumph last Thursday meant that Mr Blair will have some 60 or 70 MPs more than he expected at today's meeting — and

while early studies have suggested that the majority are Blairite in outlook, there are clearly more old-style and municipal socialists than expected. There have been inevitable worries that they will not hold as firmly to the cautious line on spending that has been imposed and accepted by the rest.

According to Mr Blair's aides, he will tell the MPs: "We ran as new Labour and we will govern as new Labour... and that the bigger than

expected majority places an added responsibility on us to do just that."

The message will be that the MPs are there in such large numbers because the party ran as new Labour "and they had better remember it," according to party sources.

Mr Blair's address to MPs is another example of his determination to keep tight, almost presidential, central control over his party and Government. While

suggestions that ministers will not be allowed to have lunches with journalists have been flatly denied, it is clear that Mr Blair has decided that the co-ordination of the Government's policies and message is essential.

Peter Mandelson, the new Minister without Portfolio, who is one of Mr Blair's closest advisers, is to chair a daily Downing Street meeting attended by press staff from No 10, Gordon Brown's office

and John Prescott's, to determine how the Government's strategy and message will be put across.

Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's press secretary, has asked that all requests for interviews with ministers be cleared with him, and Jonathan Powell, the Chief of Staff, has made plain that policy pronouncements should be co-ordinated through him.

Mr Blair is seeing teams of ministers all this week — yesterday

it was Frank Dobson's health team — to tell them what he expects of them. Downing Street insiders say the strategy is to ensure that the lessons of Opposition, including the discipline of the election campaign, are carried through into government. "The Prime Minister does not believe that that because you did the right things in Opposition you should suddenly stop in government. Ministers should understand what other ministers are doing and know the overall strategy," one insider said.

Simon Jenkins, page 18

I'm having far too much fun to put the boot in yet, says Banks

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

TONY BANKS behaved like any self-respecting soccer fan after a big win yesterday. He was an hour late getting back for an important date, he was still wearing his jeans, and he went straight round the corner for a drink with the lads.

His date was with civil servants waiting to welcome the new Minister of Sport. He emerged from the ministerial Rover at the Department of National Heritage sporting denim jeans, scuffed Dr Marten shoes and his trademark cheeky smile, after spending extra time kicking balls around West Ham's ground. From the looks on the faces of his waiting staff, they had never seen jeans on a Minister before.

Photographers suggested a more suitable setting would be the Sports Cafe round the corner. "Yeah, let's go there," said Mr Banks, and set off at a brisk trot, leaving the civil servants he had met 30 seconds earlier gulping like goldfish. One said: "I think things are going to be a bit different round here."

It was suggested that he had won his new job as a tactic by Tony Blair to keep

him too busy having fun to express his trenchant left-wing views. Mr Banks said: "If those were his feelings — what a lovely way to do it. He said 'I would like you to do it because you could bring a bit of fizz and spark to it.' I had been wondering what I was going to be doing."

A fair indication that the affairs of the ministry of fun were going to be more unusual than ever had come on the morning's *Today* programme, when Mr Banks responded to inquiries about how he would bring the 2006 World Cup to England. He could hardly be expected to have worked that out, he argued, when he didn't yet know where his department was situated.

Any Heritage mandarin who assumed he was having a little joke soon realised he wasn't when 12.30pm, his appointed arrival time at the offices off Trafalgar Square, came and went. Civil servants appeared periodically in the entrance hall and muttered to the waiting press that they weren't quite sure where he was. He was expected, "but it might be quite a while." There

were rumours that he was at Upton Park, West Ham's ground in his constituency, but they didn't know why.

He had indeed been at Upton Park, knocking footballs about for a camera crew on the pitch. Hence the jeans.

He said: "I'm the Minister of Sport, not the Foreign Secretary. I've been at a football club. I'd look silly in a suit. For a politician who likes sport, this is like heaven."

He still wanted to become

elected mayor of London one day. Asked what he would do if he violently disagreed with New Labour policy, he flashed back: "Give me a break. I've only just got the job. I'm not going to resign."

More crucial was the question of what he would do if his presence was required on government business, say a Council of Ministers meeting, which coincided with the appearance of Chelsea in the FA Cup Final. "I wouldn't go to

the ministers meeting. I couldn't possibly," he said, dismissing the question as a very silly one indeed. "I've got a ticket. A mate queued for them." It was pointed out that getting tickets was not something he needed to spend too much time worrying about any more. Mr Banks said that he would be seeking to articulate the interests of ordinary people, but that his first priority was to find his desk.

The hovering civil servants

looked relieved as he finally made his way to the department. "This is posh, isn't it?" he said as he crossed the threshold. The press asked if they could accompany him to his office. "Yeah, come on up," he said. His private secretary looked dubious. "Er, is it strictly necessary for everybody to come?" Mr Banks marched up like the Pied Piper.

"This is a bit rudimentary, it looks like a small prison

cell," he said as he was led into a modest office overlooking the National Gallery. His secretary said quickly that the department would be moving to bigger offices because there were to be four Heritage Ministers.

As he sat down at his clean desk Mr Banks noticed his In. Out and Urgent trays. "All empty. Just as I like them," he breezed. His private secretary smiled a knowing smile. "At the moment," she said quietly.

Hamiltons may yet have more news for us

By RUSSELL JENKINS

CHRISTINE HAMILTON, wife of the unelected Tory MP for Tatten, is hoping that a lucrative career as an outspol media personality beckons.

Much depends on her performance on BBC's *Have I Got News For You* this Friday. She has admitted that she may be "eaten alive" but a programme fee of about £750 will help with legal bills.

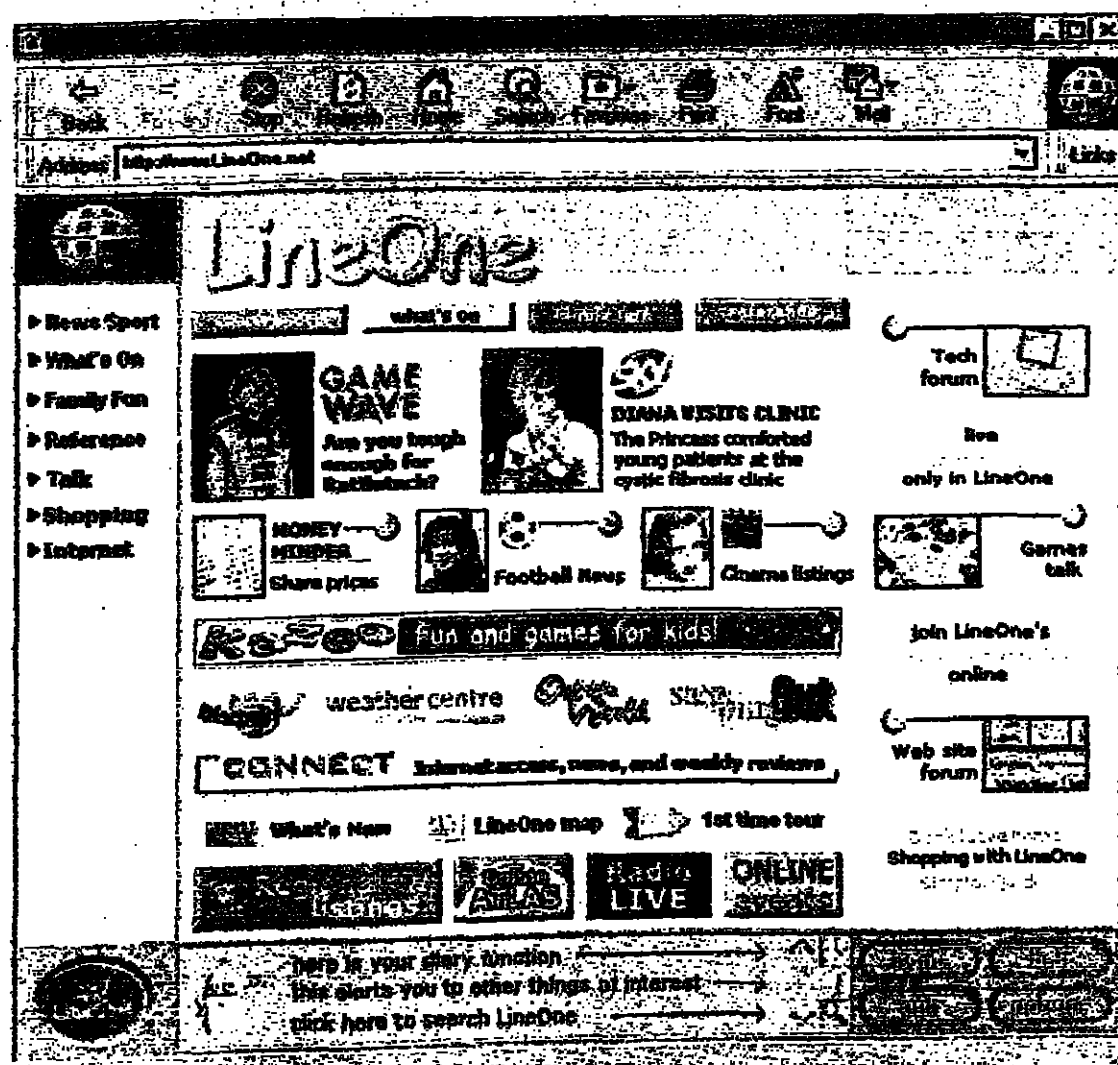
Yesterday on BBC's *Kilroy*, Mrs Hamilton, 47, said that she had lost weight through worry and wakes up in the night fearful for the future. On Monday, she and her husband spoke in similar terms on BBC Radio Five Live.

Mrs Hamilton was her husband Neil's Commons secretary until Mr Hamilton, who was at the centre of the cash-for-questions controversy, was defeated at the general election by the former BBC war correspondent Martin Bell, standing as an independent. "I do feel apprehensive," she said yesterday. "We are both out of work. We are not selling the house, at least not yet, but it still worries and sickens me."

Her husband also suggested that he might be seeking a career in broadcasting. That, he claimed, was the "one place where questions about your integrity do not seem to matter." He did not think that he was "by-election material."



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FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

Bormann was sentenced to death in absentia at Nuremberg. Forced to rely on the testimony of only a few wit-

Some said he escaped to Brazil. Others had him living under cover in Paraguay, Chile and Argentina.

Two exhumations, the last in 1993, turned up the wrong corpses. According to one doc-

The search for Bormann was so frenzied because of his undoubted closeness to Hitler who was godfather of his first child, Adolf. Since so many top Nazis escaped a final reckoning by committing suicide, postwar public opinion was adamant that at least one of the inner circle should be



the bodies of Bormann and one of Hitler's doctors, Ludwig Stumpfegger. Splinters of glass cyanide capsules were lodged in the jawbones of both men and dental records seem to confirm the identification. The most plausible explanation was that the two men had separated from other members of the bunker escape and had killed themselves after

The testing will be carried out by forensic scientists and geneticists under the auspices of the Federal Criminal Agency in Wiesbaden who have over the past years developed sophisticated DNA and computer reconstruction techniques. After the preliminary identification of Bormann in

1973, the German police said they would follow no further leads. But they insisted that Bormann's remains should not be cremated and the skeleton should be made available if further investigation were needed.

record as saying that their father was still alive. Hildegard Buch, his former mother-in-law, told investigators several years after the war. "As far as I know, he was still alive in 1949."

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

The decision is one of the first taken by the new Foreign Secretary

Yesterday the Foreign Office also published a second historical note on the results of intensive investigations into files and records that have been spurred by the international furor over dealings by neutral countries, particularly Switzerland, in Nazi gold during the Second World War. The note shows

Mr Cook said yesterday that there had rightly been deep international concern about the fate of the gold looted by the Nazis. "One of the responsibilities of those living now is to ensure that the truth is

More than 98 per cent of all the gold found in Germany after the war or paid back by the Swiss has already been distributed to claimant governments. But last year the Government halted the distribution of the remainder because of growing pressure to give it directly to victims or their families. Mr Cook said he hoped the Tripartite Gold Commission — set up by Britain, France and America after the war

The London conference will look at the historical responsibility of those handling the Nazi gold, and examine the Allies' record in deal-

The Swiss Government, which last year announced a special fund to compensate Holocaust victims, has agreed to attend and welcomed Mr Cook's announcement.

Leading article, page 19



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US hopes for coup while Mobutu is away from Zaire

FROM SAM KILEY
IN KINSHASA

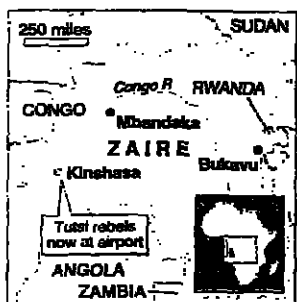
DIPLOMATIC efforts to massage Zaire's President out of office were intensified yesterday as Angolan guerrillas joined government forces and fought a fierce battle against rebel forces 125 miles east of Kinshasa.

The battle at Kenge, the last town on the road east from Zaire's capital, was part of an attempt to buy President Mobutu time to find a way out of office that did not mean handing power directly to Laurent Kabila, leader of the rebel alliance. However, that is exactly what American diplomats want him to do as part of what Bill Richardson, the US special envoy, called a "soft landing" for the rebels when they take Kinshasa.

Kabila's spokesman, said yesterday that President Mobutu will go to Libreville in Gabon today and return to the capital on Friday. "He is attending a meeting of heads of state," Mr Lumumba added.

Diplomats said yesterday that the Americans hoped that the rebels would take over while President Mobutu, 60, who has cancer, is out of the country, thus preventing his presidential guard from wrecking the capital.

But the battle at Kenge indicates that the rebels may be further away from Kinshasa than they claimed. Mr Kabila had said that his men were only 40 miles from the out-



skirts of Kinshasa. The alliance leader has shown a masterful understanding of propaganda during his seven-month advance across Zaire. In the past, he has claimed to be closer to taking cities than he really was because the suggestion of an imminent attack caused government forces to flee.

Yesterday he intensified the psychological war by spreading photocopied leaflets around Kinshasa calling on all civilians to stay calm and await a "military event without precedent". The leaflets and rebel radio broadcasts also said that supporters of the rebels should identify themselves by wearing white scarves and handkerchiefs and support those parts of the government army planning to change sides.

The leaflets had no visible effect; the streets bustled with activity and most people said that they considered Mr Mobutu's 32-year reign to be over already. "We are waiting for the rebels to come and take control. But that does not

make much difference to the issue of Mobutu. He has already lost power even if he is still in the country," Jean Matadi, a businessman, said.

Mobutu family sources continued to say that the President would not resign and that he would certainly return to Zaire after the Gabon meeting. A close family member added that government troops, augmented by at least 300 crack soldiers from Jonas Savimbi's army, the Union for the Total Independence of Angola, had fought their way past Kenge and were heading towards Kikwit, 250 miles from Kinshasa.

Missionaries in Kenge said that it was not clear who controlled the town, but they confirmed that there had been fighting, with heavy casualties on both sides. A source in Mr Mobutu's entourage said: "Most of us realise that the Mobutu era is over. The counter-attack in the east will buy time and improve our negotiating position."

Yesterday, President Mobutu's jungle headquarters and home town of Gbadolite was ransacked and looted by members of the President's private division, rebel and other sources said.

Gbadolite, near the border with the Central African Republic, is the only village in Africa with its own international airport and five-star hotel, and is Mr Mobutu's main home. He has installed his wife, Bobby, and a team of witch doctors there.



A Rwandan medical official in Kigali sprays disinfectant on the feet of Hutu refugees after their return by air yesterday to their homeland from Kisangani in Zaire. As they were arriving, fresh battles between rebels and government troops were beginning east of Kinshasa

UN 'fears the worst' for children at refugee camp

FROM PETER CAPELLA
IN GENEVA

AT least 40 per cent of the unaccompanied Rwandan children being cared for by the United Nations Children's Fund at Biaro in eastern Zaire are suffering from malaria and bullet wounds, apparently inflicted in recent weeks when rebels attacked and dispersed the refugees.

"There are many children wounded by machetes and bullets and we cannot treat them," Marie Heuzé, a UNICEF spokeswoman, said yesterday in Geneva.

In a statement, Médecins Sans Frontières described Biaro, a village 25 miles south of Kisangani, as a "death camp", where relief workers were reduced to separating the refugees who could be saved from the

dying. The organisation said that the number of children among those receiving care was diminishing. Mme Heuzé accused the rebel forces of deliberately hindering attempts to assemble unaccompanied children ready for evacuation to Kisangani and then to Rwanda.

About 30 children were taken away by rebel soldiers in a lorry on Sunday night and abandoned by the nearby

Congo river. "It makes us fear for the worst for the rest of the children in this camp," Mme Heuzé said. "Our reading is that they did it just to throw our system into disarray."

Brussels: Emma Bonino, the European Commissioner for humanitarian action, yesterday accused Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader, of creating a "real slaughterhouse" in eastern Zaire. (AFP)

Jordan water pact hits trouble

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

A NEW diplomatic crisis has emerged between Jordan and Israel over shared water resources, leading to the cancellation of high-level talks.

Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan yesterday called off a planned meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, which was meant to have been held at Naharayim — the site of the March massacre of seven Israeli girls by a Jordanian

soldier. The decision was in protest at Israel's failure to supply more water from the Jordan river under the provisions of a 1994 peace treaty.

The two were to have dedicated a hill of flowers in memory of the murdered girls and to have announced that Jordan and Israel would build a peace park at the site. Crown Prince Hassan cancelled a few hours before the ceremony was to be held, but

found time yesterday for talks with a prominent member of the Israeli Opposition, Yossi Beilin, in Amman.

Mr Netanyahu admitted yesterday that there was a "mini-crisis" in relations between the countries.

King Hussein of Jordan has cancelled a Haifa visit next month to accept an honorary doctorate, saying it was no longer convenient for him to travel in Israel.



Hassan: cancelled talks.

Bishop's wrath descends on Russian investigator

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

THE Russian Orthodox Church's secretive business practices have been placed under an unwelcome spotlight after a bishop excommunicated a state investigator for looking too deeply into the Church's money-making operations.

In a bizarre and desperate move, Bishop German of Volgograd expelled Vyacheslav Shestopalov, a veteran investigator, after the Church's highly unorthodox methods of raising funds drew the attention of the authorities.

"We were being persecuted by the prosecutor just as we were in the days of Stalin and Khrushchev," the bishop said yesterday. "I had no way to defend myself, except to excommunicate this man who hounded us."

By the Church's own admis-

sion, the problem began after it embarked on a money-making operation with the local police, whereby motorists stopped for traffic violations would be offered the choice of losing their driving licences or paying a "contribution" towards the building of a local church.

While the operation might seem more comic than criminal, investigators noted that large sums were being deposited in the account of a local building firm, which effectively was controlled by the Church.

Mr Shestopalov, whose excommunication means that he is barred from sacraments and could in theory go to hell unless he repents his sins, is taking the affair lightly. "He reacted calmly to the order because he does not believe in

God," his spokesman said. "Being expelled from an organisation he does not belong to makes little difference to him."

Nevertheless, the move has reawakened interest in the Church's business activities, which last year alone accumulated hundreds of millions of pounds in commercial operations, from bottling mineral water to publishing.

Some schemes seem harmless enough. In Moscow, for instance, cash-strapped priests have set up blessing stations on the roadside, where for the equivalent of a pound motorists can have their car blessed.

The area of most concern, however, involves a highly lucrative import-export business, which makes the Church one of the biggest players in the Russian market.

Chinese rebuke to Japan

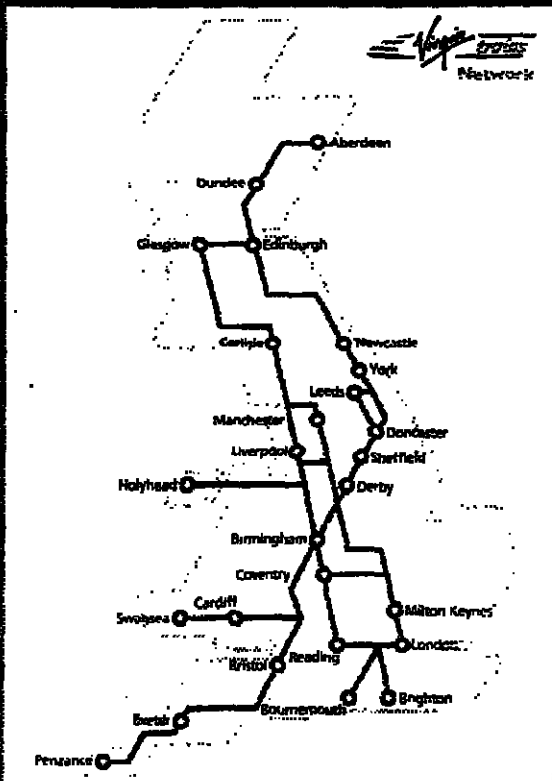
Tokyo: China delivered a stern rebuke to Japan yesterday for allowing a Japanese MP to land on the disputed Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea in a move designed to assert Tokyo's sovereignty.

Shingo Nishimura, a right-wing member of the opposition New Frontier Party, enraged Beijing by landing with three companions on one of the uninhabited islands claimed by China and Taiwan and hoisting the Japanese flag.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said the intrusion was a serious violation of China's sovereignty. The landing was condemned by Ryutaro Hashimoto, Japan's Prime Minister.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

VIRGIN TRAINS OFFER SOON DEPARTING.



See the Sunday Times next Sunday for details.

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Melbourne gambles on casino complex

FROM ROGER MAYNARD
IN SYDNEY

THIS week's opening of the largest casino in Australia and Asia will turn Melbourne into the Las Vegas of the southern hemisphere.

The £1 billion casino site, with its hotel, convention centre, cinema complex, 52 bars and restaurants and 34 upmarket shops, dwarfs anything this gambling-mad na-

tion has seen before. Aimed at the Asian market, which is expected to account for a third of its revenue, analysts forecast that the Crown Casino will make £500 million in its first year alone. But sceptics believe an operation of this size has little chance of getting off the ground, and have already nicknamed it the Spruce Goose, after the American aeroplane that was too big to fly.

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Clinton delivers tough message to Mexico on drugs

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN MEXICO CITY

PRESIDENT Clinton called yesterday for a new era of close co-operation between Mexico and the United States, while delivering a tough message behind the scenes that Mexico should combat urgently corruption and drug trafficking if it wanted American support.

The first US President to visit Mexico for nearly 20 years, Mr Clinton said that "powerful currents of commerce and culture pull us together". In Mexico City's Campo Marte parade ground, standing with his wife, Hillary, in front of massed military for a 21-gun salute, Mr Clinton added that the US needed to work urgently with its southern "allies" to meet "common challenges".

Madeline Albright, the Secretary of State, Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, and General Barry McCaffrey, the drug czar, also gathered in Mexico City yesterday for parallel talks with their counterparts, such as the seriousness with which America views the drugs, immigration and environmental problems along the 2,000-mile shared border.

Mr Clinton's plea for co-

operation comes after months of sharply deteriorating relations between the two countries. The arrest in February of Mexico's top counter-narcotics official for alleged links to drug cartels provoked many in Congress to try to block the annual "recertification" of Mexico as an ally in the drugs war. The Mexican Government was then infuriated last month by tough new American rules to expel illegal immigrants — at least three million Mexicans have crossed the border illegally — as well as by videos showing US border guards treating Mexicans roughly.

Mr Clinton said yesterday that he had backed Mexico repeatedly against its critics in Congress, pushing through the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta) in 1993 and organising an emergency \$13 billion (£8 billion) loan during the peso crisis two years later. He backs the continuation and extension of Nafta, up for debate in Congress this summer.

But the strong message he was also believed to have delivered yesterday in an hour of private talks with President Zedillo was that, unless the US

and Mexico made rapid progress on drugs, immigration and pollution, his ability to secure support from Congress would be in jeopardy. He has said that drug trafficking and corruption threatened to undermine Mexican democracy. Señor Zedillo said yesterday: "We appreciate President Clinton's strength of character in offering help to Mexico to overcome the economic emergency." However, on Friday Señor Zedillo dismissed America's request to arm its drug-enforcement officials in Mexico, one of the main issues in dispute, prompted by the growing violence of drug gangs. It would be a clear infringement of Mexico's sovereignty, he said.

Señor Zedillo is anxious not to be seen to be soft on the US; his party, the PRI, is fighting to maintain control of the federal Congress, which it has held for 68 years, in mid-term elections on July 6.

Ms Albright, in Mexico since Monday for the fourteenth meeting of the US-Mexican Binational Commission, which tackles the details of these disputes, called on Mexico to help in the fight against the hydra-headed evil of



President Zedillo greets President Clinton and his wife in Mexico City before talks between the two leaders

drugs, corruption, money-laundering, illegal arms trafficking and organised crime". State Department officials say that America will provide \$6 million towards Mexico's anti-drug efforts, in particular for training replacements for

1,200 allegedly corrupt officers who have been dismissed. The commission also announced that the US and Mexico will share the \$250 million cost of sewage plants at the border, rapidly becoming one of the most polluted zones of

either country. Rapid progress on those issues is the minimum Mr Clinton needs to press the case for Nafta, set to be one of this summer's toughest battles between the White House and Congress.

Visit to tomb: During his

visit Mr Clinton will lay a wreath at the tomb of five Mexican cadets killed 150 years ago resisting a US invasion. He will leave Mexico today for a summit of Central American leaders in San José, Costa Rica. (AFP)

NEWS IN BRIEF

US soldier jailed for rapes

A drill sergeant at the heart of the US Army's growing sex scandal was jailed for 25 years yesterday for raping six recruits (Ian Brodie writes).

Delmar Simpson, 32, faced a maximum life sentence for 18 counts of rape and other sex offences at Aberdeen training camp, north of Washington. He was demoted to private, forfeited pay and was dishonourably discharged.

The prosecution had urged the six jurors to impose the maximum sentence as a message to all drill sergeants that sexual misconduct would not be tolerated.

Babies preserved

Cluj: The bodies of 47 babies have been found in a hospital tank of formaldehyde. Under Romanian law parental consent must be given for hospitals to bury children, but many were abandoned. (AFP)

Bomb kills four

Algiers: A car bomb exploded near two schools in an Algiers suburb, killing a child and three adolescents and wounding 25 other people, officials said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. (AFP)

High earners

Lisbon: Police in northern Portugal have arrested 11 officials of a building company which paid its workers by giving them three daily doses of heroin and cocaine, newspaper reports said. (AFP)

Spain lashed

Barcelona: High winds swept across Spain, stranding hundreds of fishing boats in ports and causing part of a building's facade to collapse in Barcelona, killing a woman pedestrian. (AP)

Grenade tragedy

Tirana: Three people were killed and ten wounded when a drunken man carrying a grenade tripped as he got on to a bus in a central Albanian town, causing an explosion. The drunk died. (Reuters)

Heston's role

Los Angeles: Charlton Heston, the actor, was elected vice-president of the National Rifle Association at its annual conference to help lead America's beleaguered gun lobbyists back to national prominence.

Fowl weather

Beijing: A tornado which swept through eastern China killed 100,000 ducks and chickens, injured more than 30 people and damaged 23,000 acres of farmland, state radio reported. (AFP)

Sister says McVeigh railed against 'fascist tyrants' after Waco siege

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON



Jennifer McVeigh: court sketch of her yesterday

TIMOTHY McVEIGH'S sister turned on him yesterday, testifying that the chief suspect in the Oklahoma City bombing told her "something big" was about to happen only weeks before the blast that killed 168 adults and children.

Jennifer McVeigh, 23, giving evidence in Denver under a pseudonym from prosecution, said that she had received a letter from her brother that appeared to signal the impending explosion and advised her to prolong a planned Florida spring holiday.

He ordered her to burn the letter. A second missive, sent about three weeks before the bombing, wanted to know whether the initial document had been intercepted by federal authorities.

Mr McVeigh, 29, faces the death penalty for his role in the bombing, the worst terrorist act in American history, which decimated the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building on April 19, 1995.

His sister is considered to be a linchpin for the prosecution case in determining more than

merely physical evidence against Mr McVeigh. Criticism of the FBI forensic science laboratory in Washington has already undermined parts of the prosecution case, but Ms McVeigh, the alleged bomber's closest relative, yesterday provided the strongest motive for his actions.

She explained his anger over the federal siege at Waco, Texas, which led to the deaths of 80 members of the Branch Davidian cult exactly two years before the conflagration in Oklahoma.

Mr McVeigh, his sister said, had railed against federal agents as "fascist tyrants" and "power-hungry storm troopers". During one visit in late 1994, he showed her a videotape of the Waco raid and told her he no longer felt that handing out anti-government literature was enough to temper the encroaching power of government. "He was not in the propaganda stage," Ms McVeigh, a student, described her brother as saying. "He was now in the action stage."

convicted — allegedly punched, strangled and raped the seven-year-old, before wrapping her body in a series of plastic bags and discarding it in a public park outside town.

The trial, which is continuing, is expected to end all vestiges of opposition to "Megan's law", which some civil liberties groups have criticised as unconstitutional.

Convicted offender 'raped girl, 7'

New York: The trial in New Jersey of a twice-convicted sex offender, accused of raping and murdering a seven-year-old girl, began yesterday (Tunku Varadarajan writes).

The murdered girl, Megan Kanka, has lent her name posthumously to legislation enacted in every American state. Known as "Megan's law", it requires convicted paedophiles to register with

the police where they live. The prosecutor told the jury how Jesse Timmendquas — who lived opposite the Kankas in Hamilton Township, New Jersey, and whose criminal past was known to no one in the neighbourhood — lured Megan to his home in July 1994, offering to show her a puppy.

Mr Timmendquas — who faces the death penalty if

Beetles fly to rescue of Everglades

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

SQUADRONS of snout beetles have been airlifted to the Everglades, America's largest swamp, in a desperate attempt to stop the Australian melaleuca tree from wiping out hundreds of species of local plants and insects.

The tree, whose spongy-like qualities were once believed to be good for swamplands, was introduced into the Everglades at the turn of the century by well-meaning farmers. But its unforeseen proliferation has seriously disturbed the ecological balance of the area.

The melaleuca has colonised nearly 20 per cent of the 7.5 million-acre swamp-land. Government botanists fear that more than half of the Everglades could turn into a melaleuca forest within 50 years. The snout beetles, which kill off the trees and are also of Australian provenance, are seen as a last resort.

Tobacco firm wins but talks continue

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AN American jury has again decreed that cigarette makers owe nothing to the families of lifelong smokers who die of lung cancer. But the verdict will not stop the secret negotiations under way between the tobacco industry and a powerful coalition of anti-smoking forces.

Jurors in Jacksonville, Florida, refused to hold R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, maker of Winston and Salem cigarettes, responsible for the death of Jean Connor. She was a bank supervisor who started smoking at 15, developed a three-packets-a-day habit and died of lung cancer at 49.

The jury heeded Reynolds's argument against sending a message that it was all right for smokers to carry on smoking because their families would collect money in the end. Lawyers for the Connor family argued in vain that Reynolds should be held accountable for knowingly selling a lethal product that was the equivalent of "candy with razor blades inside".

The six jurors, including three former smokers and an

occasional smoker, found Reynolds cigarettes were not "unreasonably dangerous and defective" and the firm was not negligent for making them.

The tobacco industry has won in at least 19 similar civil liability cases without paying a cent in damages. There is an appeal outstanding over one award of \$750,000 (£460,000) where the late smoker had tried in vain to break the habit.

Although the Connor verdict was a victory for the embattled tobacco firms, they have been losing the war and suffered a serious setback two weeks ago when a judge ruled that the Government could regulate cigarettes as a drug.

The firms resumed talks in Dallas yesterday in the hope of reaching a settlement with anti-smoking forces. As envisaged, the deal would limit the firms' liability in exchange for a wide range of concessions, including government regulation, agreement to pay for anti-smoking campaigns, elimination of cigarette vending machines and an end to sponsorship of sports events.

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Shape up for the summer

ARE you an hourglass, a spoon, a cone or a cube? Do you have sparrow's thighs, but the shoulders of an all-in wrestler? A wasp waist, but a pear-shaped bottom? Everyone puts on weight in the places where nature decrees — something not taken into account by most diets. But as a nation whose twin preoccupations are food and chic, the French have the answer. For each shape, goes the latest thinking from across the Channel, a different strategy...



THE HOURGLASS

Hourglasses have all the luck: wasp waist, curvy hips and a bosom that doesn't disappear when they start to lose weight — like Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita*. In short, it is the figure we would all like to have. So what are the problems? A tummy that tends to flab; upper arms and thighs prone to thickening, especially in winter — and a disinclination to take exercise.

SHAPING UP

You don't need to take radical measures. The goal is to keep in shape and avoid binges. Get into the habit of drinking mineral water — a litre a day. If you don't like the idea of taking strenuous exercise, consider something that is sociable and fun — aerobics classes, or better still, dance.

To lose a couple of kilos quickly, try a weekend detox diet (always consult your doctor before embarking on a diet).

THE WEEKEND DIET

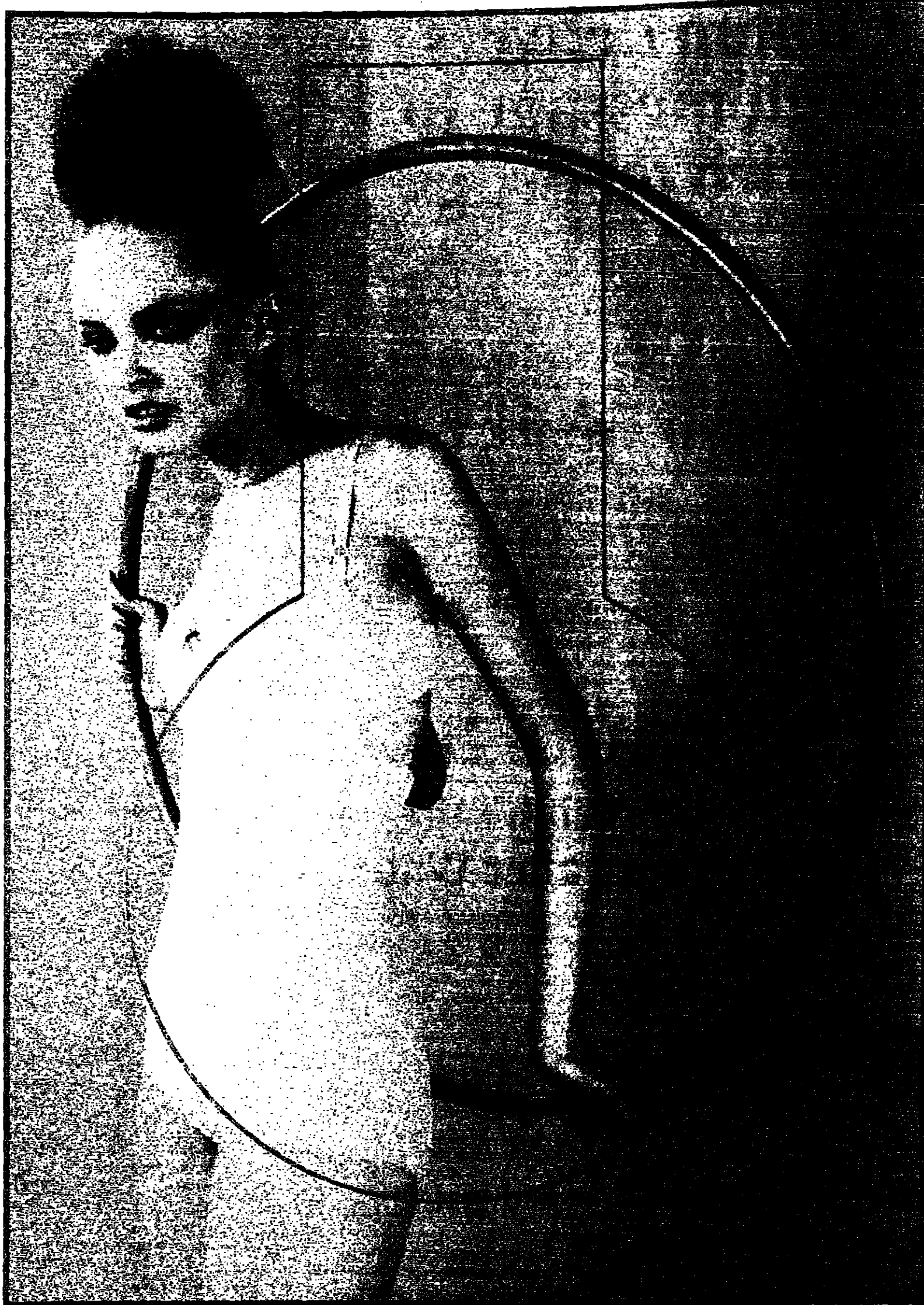
On waking, drink half a litre of still mineral water.

Breakfast: A bowl of skimmed milk with honey and a teaspoon of unsweetened drinking chocolate.

Elevenes: An orange or grapefruit. One litre of water. Lunch: Fish steamed with herbs and olive oil, or grilled white meat, or grilled red meat, served with green vegetables. Two hours later, plain yoghurt with a teaspoon of honey.

Tea: The juice of one lemon with water and a teaspoon of honey.

Supper: Three bowls of vegetable bouillon, then three small servings of cooked vegetables. Allow ten to 20 minutes between each serving. Bedtime: Yoghurt with a teaspoon of honey.



THE SPOON

Spoon-shaped women are basically slim, with narrow shoulders and a flat stomach. Genetically programmed to put on weight around the hips, thighs and legs, as spoons (or pears) get older they become prone to saddle-bag thighs, fleshy knees and cellulite.

SHAPING UP

Because they are slim, spoons can develop an obsession with putting on

weight and have a tendency to under-eat. They are hypermotivated when slimming and throw themselves into diets, ignoring the nutritional dangers, then give in and buy a chocolate bar. To break the cycle of undernourishment and abandoned diets, spoons must be tolerant of their eating habits and learn to stabilise their weight.

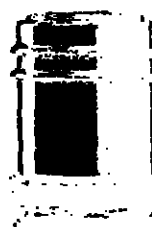
THE DIET

End the hunger strike. Do not skip breakfast and lunch. Drastic diets

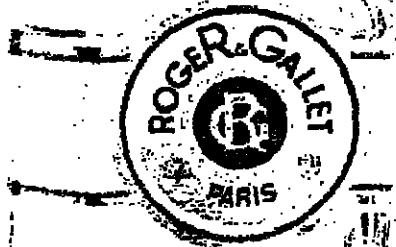
make the spoon look unattractively gaunt and flat chested. Concentrate your calorie intake on the early part of the day (25 per cent at breakfast, a decent lunch, a light supper). Eat plenty of fibre and drink lots of water. You will be eating more — but better. Breakfast: An unsweetened drink. Two slices of wholemeal bread with a scrape of butter, or a bowl of high-fibre cereal with semi-skimmed milk. Fresh fruit. One plain yoghurt, unsweetened, or a serving of low-fat fromage frais.

Elevenes: An apple, or two fibre-rich crispbread. Lunch: Grilled turkey, veal or chicken breast, or a portion of steamed fish. Vegetables or pulses with a slice of bread, pasta or rice. Alternatively, a salad of raw vegetables, egg or ham. Tea: Fruit yoghurt. Dinner: Vegetable soup. Grilled fish, or two eggs, cooked any way, or two slices of ham with all fat removed. A large plate of green vegetables. Yoghurt or fruit. No bread, pasta, or rice.

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THE CONE

Cones have wide shoulders, small breasts, slim legs. So what is the problem? A tendency to put on flesh on the upper body: a double chin, sagging arms, a little pot belly. Cones love food, but eat too fast.

SHAPING UP

Chew food properly, listen when your body tells you that you are full. Cut down on alcohol.

THE DIET

Breakfast: Unsweetened tea or coffee. Slice of bread, or unsweetened cereal. One egg, or a slice of ham. Fruit. Elevenes: Yoghurt, cheese, fruit.

Lunch: Grilled white meat or fish. Potatoes or pasta, and green vegetables or salad.

Tea: Unsweetened tea, bran muffin.

Dinner: Vegetable soup, white meat or fish. For something lighter, a mixed salad with a slice of ham, or a seafood salad with green beans.



THE CUBE

Cubes have generous hips and bosom, well-covered legs, ankles and knees. They love fast food and give in to temptation.

SHAPING UP

Take dieting one step at a time. Concentrate on eating small, regular meals. Empty cupboards of "taboo" foods.

THE DIET

Breakfast: Unsweetened tea, semi-skimmed milk. Two slices of bread with butter and jam. Fruit.

Elevenes: Fruit, yoghurt.

Lunch: White meat or fish. Pasta, vegetables. Yoghurt or fruit. Tea: Slimmer's biscuits.

Dinner: Vegetable soup. Grilled lean meat or fish with green vegetables. A small piece of goat's cheese. Fruit.

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'Shirley Williams held her knife and fork in her fists'



'Terence Conran is a man of achievement but no intellectual. I suppose I make him feel inferior'



'Mrs Thatcher's decor was suburban hairdresser'

Plots and tears at the V&A

February 9, 1974

My first three weeks as Director of the V&A have been hell. The dreary Civil Service-ness of it all, the terrible forms, files, the smell of Jeyes Fluid, the dirty loos—all the things I can't stand, but I will change it, and I am. I want to get the 20th century into that place and make it alive and a comment on our times.

September 20, 1975

It has been a very tough 18 months. Of all the battles those with the unions have been most unbelievable. Their great objective is to achieve a union closed shop. Above all there must be no changes.

October 8

There are intrigues going on for the replacement of Hugh Jenkins (Minister for the Arts). Thank God. The man is an idiot, dangerous and dim.

1976

If I had to choose one year in my life which I would never wish to relive, this would be it. It began when I was summoned, together with Margaret Weston, Director of the Science Museum, to the DES. The meeting was confidential. No one was to be told what happened there, which was a request that we were to do an exercise as to how we would cut our staff by up to 25 per cent. I came back to the V&A with my world shattered. On November 2 the entire staff of the Museum was gathered into the Raphael Cartoon

Court. I then read out what was to happen, my voice choked with emotion and the tears welling. I walked alone, broken and defeated. All one was left with was the will to fight.

April 7

I went to the Minister of Education's office for the presentation of a medal. The Minister, Fred Mulley, is a north-country slob, coarse of feature, not very bright but affectionate and good in his handling of the occasion. The office was still largely with Mrs Thatcher's decor, suburban hairdresser style. The Permanent Secretary, Sir William Pile, was very funny about her. His most revealing moment with her, he said, was when [during the Jellicoe affair] she had steered herself up one day, when travelling in the back of a car with him, to ask: "Did men really pay that kind of money for that sort of thing?" She lives in a world apart, unaware of how most of the population lived.

October 5

Now the Government cuts for the V&A have really started to bite with a savagery. As Director I face the worst crisis since 1939.



THE ROY STRONG DIARIES

Day Three of our series: conflict with the unions, intrigue among the Trustees

Everything here in Britain is so gloomy. The main theme is can we or can we not survive until the 1980s without a collapse of society as we know it. One is confused, bewildered, despairing.

November 15
We went to the Royal Box at Covent Garden as guests of John and Anya Sainsbury with Shirley Williams (the new Secretary of State for Education) and Professor Anthony King as the other guests. Mrs Williams strikes one as oddly short, but that is because she seems to have no neck. She moves awkwardly and I noticed that she held her cutlery in her fists and gesticulated with her knife and fork as she spoke.

Anthony King, with whom she lives, is an overweight provincial academic from the University of Essex. She clearly needs him as a prop, whereas Mrs Thatcher could manage without Denis!

October 17

We drove back from the country early to have dinner with Arnold Goodman. I was able to draw him to one side and say that I wanted to see him about disestablishing the museum. He didn't bat an eyelid. He warned me of the dangerous position in which I was putting myself. I was not to be seen to be pushing the cause and must opt out from now on until it could be brought into the open. He began to think that a letter to *The Times* could be written signed by the key names. Would I write a draft? This I did and delivered by hand the next morning.

February 14, 1980

Having lived through four changes of Minister for the Arts since 1974, one gets used to them coming and going. I was not heartbroken to see Jack Donaldson make an exit.

He was a nice man, but too feeble. Norman St John-Stevens is far more complex. It is too simplistic to say that he's a nasty man but one who will produce the goods. All the problems start and finish with his personality. He likes the hired domestic grand style and having Princess Margaret to dinner. Indeed he's obsessed with HRH, with whom he makes a not uninteresting parallel. Like her he has a sharp, quick mind and wit, but unlike her, his has been trained by education. Like her he is a person of total irrational caprice.

March, 1981
The fall of Norman St John-Stevens was very sudden. I had guessed ages before that his successor would be Paul Channon and I was right and it was a great relief. Norman had done well by the Arts but he was temperamental, unpredictable, and capricious.

April 1
At Clarence House, I swooped on Mrs Thatcher, saying how pleased we were with Paul Channon. She looked amazingly fresh considering the battering she'd undergone. Yes, she was pleased with Paul too. Yes, Norman was too much. Look at the way he'd done his office up, she exclaimed. No sense of economy. Not a penny had been spent on 10 Downing Street.

May 28
It was rather a piano Royal Academy Dinner. The food was filthy and the speeches very dull. I seized my chance to tell the Prime Minister that the poor V&A mustn't be sacrificed yet again because of Civil Service cuts. She sailed on, saying that she had given the Arts masses of money. During her after-dinner speech extolling her munificence in terms of cash to the Arts, she interjected: "In spite of what Dr Roy Strong says." I wanted to sink through the floor but afterwards she came up to me and rather sweetly put her arm through mine and said, "What is the problem? That I thought rather marvelous and I told her exactly what our problem was."

April 24, 1985
This is an odd, interim year. We are progressively involved in deadlock with the Trustees. On April 22 the Trustees had a meeting at Apsley House when [Terence] Conran from the outset seemed never to listen and, I noticed, yawned and leaned backwards.

Over lunch Conran behaved like a *sansculotte* triumphant. I put before them again the superb bust by Roubillac of Lord Chesterfield. "What do we want work by that foreigner for? I know someone who can make a copy of that, so that you'll not notice the difference. Why can't we share it with the National Portrait Gallery and shunt it to and fro?" Thus Terence Conran. This is a man of achievement; yet he's no intellectual and I suppose I make him feel inferior and so as usual he bullies his way through.

June 13
Trustees' meetings have devel-

If I had to choose one year never to relive, this would be it

TOMORROW

'I have never felt anger, rage and resentment so deeply as I did in my early teens'

Sir Roy Strong on his father

oped into very unpleasant affairs. They have proved a real collection of weather-cocks. Carrington was completely flattened by Grey Gowrie, who told him that Getty had given the National Gallery £50 million. In the taxi back from White's, he said he had been a failure. He has. So have all the Trustees.

November 4

On the whole the media have gone along with our policy of voluntary admission charges. On the day it began there was the usual rent-a-picket from the left wing, the "stars" (including the playwright Colin Welland) were photographed by the media and went. It all blew over by midday.

November 11

A long talk with Mary Giles on Sunday. Yes, there had been a strong move to get rid of me by a group of Trustees earlier this year. Gowrie too, I was told, wished this to happen. "He was no friend to you," Mary said.

May 28, 1986

A party at 28 Upper Phillimore Gardens given by Evelyn and Victoria de Rothschild. The Cabinet was heavily in evi-

dence: Nigel Lawson looking more and more like George IV in decay, and pinch-faced Norman Tebbit whom I berated and discomfited by introducing myself and saying: "You and I are the only people in public life with this one thing in common. We went to the same grammar school."

June 2, 1986

I found myself at the Princess of Wales's table, too distant to speak. It was interesting to study the Princess. The freshness and bloom had gone. Now she was thinner and sharper of feature with a hard jutting chin and hair lacquered to the point of snapping. She doesn't hold herself well and her dress was rather sleazy with huge puff sleeves. When the dancing began we fled.

February 24, 1987

Soon after I announced my resignation from the V&A we bumped into Peter Hall, Maria Ewing and child. "We're leftovers from the Sixties," Peter raged, I said, "Speak for yourself." Peter then said that he had been working on his exit for four years. I said that I had for three.

Extracted from *The Roy Strong Diaries 1967-1987*, by Roy Strong, to be published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson on May 12, £20.

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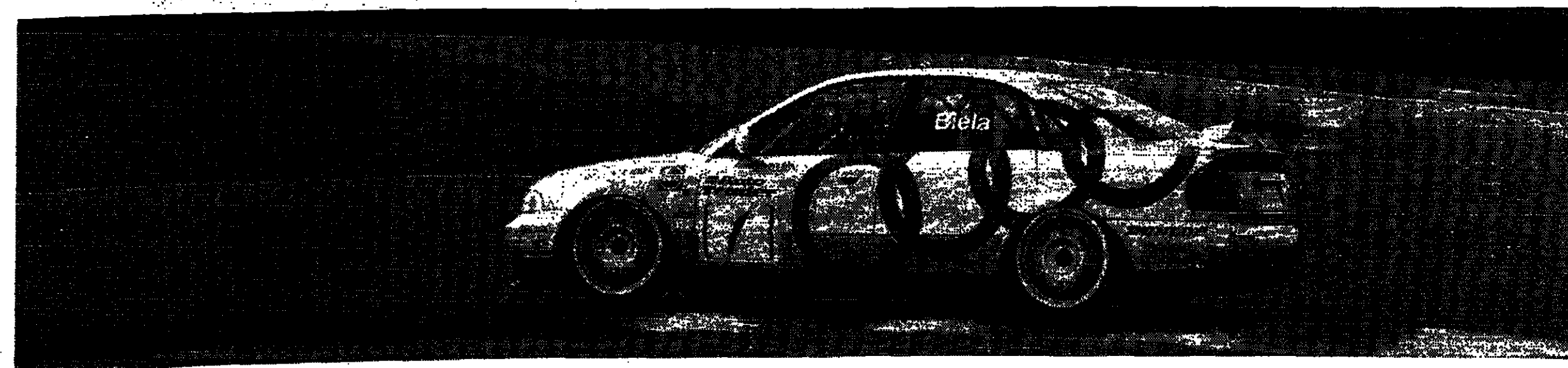
Fig. 11. The water-lily fold for table napkins.

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A steel cage for the Iron Chancellor

Brown is throwing away the key to policy, says Anatole Kaletsky

Philip Snowden, Stafford Cripps, James Callaghan, John Smith and now Gordon Brown. Nearly every Labour Chancellor (and Shadow Chancellor) has started off by trying to insure his party against the innate hostility of financial markets by locking the pound in a golden cage and throwing away the key. All of Mr Brown's predecessors lived to regret their servitude to whatever happened to be the City's opinion at the time — on the gold standard in the 1920s and 1930s, on the post-war parity against the dollar in the 1940s, on devaluation in the 1960s, on the exchange-rate mechanism in the 1970s, and today on the need for an independent central bank.

In this sense, Mr Brown's surprise announcement yesterday should hardly have been surprising. Why, then, did it surprise even the Governor of the Bank of England himself?

Partly, of course, because everyone, maybe even the Governor, assumed that a change of such far-reaching importance would either have been announced in Labour's manifesto or would have been preceded by lengthy consultations.

Green Papers, parliamentary debates and so on. After all, Tony Blair himself said yesterday that this was "the biggest step in economic policy-making in Britain since World War Two". One wonders how many more decisions of such importance have been kept back from the manifesto, to be rushed out at hurriedly assembled press conferences during a parliamentary recess. If this is what happens when a fresh-faced idealistic Government is still in the first flush of its naive commitment to transparency, accountability and open democratic debate, how will these people behave after they have tasted power for more than five days?

But leaving aside the constitutional nicety that nobody has voted for this reform, what is wrong with making the Bank independent?

The two economic principles behind central bank independence are that inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon, and that there is never a political choice to be made between curbing inflation and encouraging economic growth. Most economists believe them and therefore support independent central banks. Unfortunately, like many of the things believed through the ages by most economists, both of these statements are manifestly false. This is why central bank independence is rarely sufficient to curb inflation and is often the cause of prolonged recessions — as in Germany over the past three years.

The countries that have made a success of central bank independence have done so by gradually moving away from the monetarist view that monetary policy should concern itself solely with controlling inflation. In America, the Fed is explicitly charged with achieving the highest possible rate of growth and employment consistent with monetary stability. This is a far cry from the virtually exclusive preoccupation with prices in Germany and at the new Bank of England.

Even in America, however, independence brings a serious problem. Once they abandon crude monetarism, the authorities can use two main tools for managing the economy: interest rates, and the fiscal balance between taxes and public spending. These tools must be used in close coordination. But if the central bank is independent, there can be no guarantee that changes in fiscal policy (for example, an increase in taxes) will be balanced by corresponding monetary moves. Because the government can never be sure that the bank will reward a tougher fiscal policy with lower interest rates, unpleasant fiscal decisions tend to be put off until they are forced by a crisis. Central banks, on the other hand, keep interest rates up for months or years ahead of tough budgets because they do not trust governments to raise tax. Anyone who thinks that a damaging policy standoff between a government and an independent central bank is just a theoretical curiosity should recall the budgetary paralysis in America in the 1980s or the stalemate over fiscal and monetary policy in Germany these past three years.

Now consider the present economic situation in Britain. The economy needs a tighter fiscal policy, accompanied by a lower interest rate and a lower exchange rate. To achieve this rebalancing, interest rates and tax policy have to be moved at the same time. But can the Bank now be relied on to deliver the monetary easing that should go with higher taxes? And will British industry, which is suffering grievously from the overvalued pound, support the Chancellor's plan to deflate the economy by raising taxes, if he cannot guarantee a payoff in lower interest rates and a more competitive pound?

As it happens, Mr Brown will probably get away with it this time. Eddie George is eager for reappointment and is likely to oblige with lower interest rates and a helpful attitude to the pound. He made a point of stating yesterday that "the pound is uncomfortably strong and is not likely to be sustained at this level into the medium term". But will he be so obliging once he is reappointed for a further five years? And what will happen when the Bank and the Government start to disagree about where the economy should be going?

Freeing the Bank of England may seem like a clever wheeze in the short term, winning financial Brownie points. But sooner or later economic conditions will turn more hostile. Only then will the more Mr Brown's sudden announcement reminds me of John Major's equally unexpected and "irreversible" decision to join the exchange-rate mechanism.

Control by the Bank recalls our entry into the ERM

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"WE OFFER A COMPLETE BREAK WITH THE PAST..."

Blair's major-generals

The Cromwellian temptation is hard for Labour's Roundheads to resist

I am a sucker for new dawns. The rose bursts early from its bud. Happy children skip across village greens. Cats stretch in the sun. Old women clutch their pension books and murmur, "God bless you, Tony". Every little breeze seems to whisper "Cherie".

That was on Saturday. On Sunday a cold front swept in from North Utsira and winter returned. I was driving through the Pennines and sleet bucketed from leaden clouds. New Labour, new weather, someone said in a pub. The radio began pouring out a stream of bulletins from London.

The news was that Roundheads had arrived in Downing Street. Horses were neighing in the courtyard. Spurs clanked into the Cabinet Office. Ironside fists swept papers from desks and helmets crashed onto tottering hat-stands. God's Englishman had won the war and would now order the peace, his major-generals in attendance.

Every new ruler is dazzled by the perks of office, yet equally convinced of its unprecedented importance. Tony Blair finds himself head of the most dominant executive in the Western world. He need fear no constitutional check on his powers, no balancing legislature or supreme court. Like Cromwell, he can disregard the monarchy, abolish the Lords and treat Parliament as a cypher. Despite a minority popular mandate, he enjoys the public's goodwill. He can play the game of power any way he likes.

He clearly means to play it strong. Ben Pimlott records in his biography of Harold Wilson that 1964 saw a horde of political appointees sweep into Downing Street, ostensibly to stop the Civil Service impeding Labour's "New Britain". An opaque concept then as now. The team moved into every attic and cupboard. Marcia Williams, Gordon Wigg, Tommy Balogh, Trevor Lloyd-Hughes, John Allen, Gerald Kaufman, pitched camp in Marcia's eyrie and declared war on two foes, the Civil Service and ministers outside the loop. The cabal was intensely unpopular.

When Margaret Thatcher came to power, her most memorable statement on Whitehall reform was that she did not believe in kitchen cabinets. "My political advisers are my Cabinet," she said. This was not wholly true, but the Downing Street court was never a standing army against the party or Civil Service. Power lay with officials, such as Clive Whitmore, Charles Powell and Ber-

nard Ingham, whose loyalty was tested not on the hustings but in the more subtle battles of Whitehall.

Mr Blair is reverting to the Wilson model. He believes that John Major failed because he lacked control over his Government. Labour won a victory under a leadership utterly in command of the party as a fighting machine. Discipline was total, down to speeches, clothes, demeanour on election night, even the interpretation of history. To Mr Blair, the technique that won the election must now be thrown at "winning" government. His commanders in the field

departmental ministers. It worries about morning papers and evening newscasts. What makes Downing Street smile is a point scored on the Today programme or a foe traduced by the Daily Mail.

Political appointees in Downing Street are instinctively on a war footing. They need an enemy or they lose thrust and cohesion. Yet as Gibbon observed, nothing is more dangerous to an emperor than a Praetorian guard without an enemy. The structure of power that Mr Blair seems to be putting in place is not so much presidential as antagonistic. The personalities are the sort who will heat-seek enemies to replace the defeated Militant Tendency, Clause Four, old Labour and John Major.

There will be no shortage. The great contest of every government is between the Treasury and the rest. It is between the "great fact" of the budget arithmetic and the massed pressures of voters, lobbies and spending departments, all eager to contest the fact. In Mr Blair's Government, everything will turn on this struggle. Spending plans will obsess the 300 under-employed Labour backbenchers. They will obsess the media. They will obsess a public stirred by Mr Blair to a feverish expectation of newness, change and betterness.

My reading of this week's appointments is that the Treasury under Gordon Brown will be tougher even than under Kenneth Clarke. If Mr Brown is to be cast as the composite Stafford Cripps and Denis Healey of new Labour, he will get his retaliation in first. He has already announced his wish to fulfil Lord Lawson's ambition and make the Treasury the supreme of domestic policy. How else can resources be properly planned?

These battles will have two outcomes. First the Treasury will win more often than lose, because Downing Street's concern will be increasingly with short-term politics and presentation. Second, the life of a spending minister will be wretched

beyond belief. Trapped between Treasury targets and Downing Street interference, departments such as the Home Office, education, health and environment will degenerate into little more than cash-limited agencies. My sympathies go out to the hapless John Prescott. He will be overwhelmed by his giant new environment department, while Messrs Mandelson, Powell and Campbell e-mail him orders on the Downing Street web-site.

If ever there was a Cinderella passage in a manifesto, it was Mr Blair's attack on the over-centralisation of government, its bureaucracy and lack of accountability under the Tories. This precisely mirrored Margaret Thatcher's attack, before taking office, on Britain's "centralising, managerial, bureaucratic, interventionist" style of government. Such is the effluvia of all oppositions under centralised constitutions. As Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher said, we must centralise before we can decentralise.

Yet she did restore some status to the Cabinet as an institution of government. She never made it a deliberative forum — it was too leaky for that — but she did use it as a parliament of government, balancing the wings of the party, acting as lightning-conductor for trouble and as a tournament in which ministers' reputations could rise and fall. When she began to ignore her Cabinet after the 1987 victory, her slide began.

Mr Blair is approaching power with belt and braces. Against all academic analysis, he seems to believe that Downing Street is not a strong institution of modern government, but a weak one. Cabinet government must be not pluralistic or open, but regimented from the centre. The centre must equally be ready for total war. This aggressive philosophy of government is bold. It defies the maxim that absolute power corrupts. It also challenges the democratic organism to develop its own antibodies. These will emerge, among Labour's unwieldy backbenchers, in the press, in the opinion polls, in some massed rebellion of spending ministers. The more overbearing Mr Blair's new structure, the sooner they will emerge. To the charge of hypocrisy, new Labour already has its answer. In matters of government, hypocrisy is about timing.

I suppose only timing will show. One thing at least is exhilarating about new dawns. A whole new day lies ahead. That is 24 hours in which the sceptic can be proved wrong.

Simon Jenkins

The price of a Tory obsession

Sir Leon Brittan

says Europe could cost two elections

We Conservatives lost the election, and lost heavily, because we allowed the campaign to obscure our compelling message on the economy and exposed our divisions over Europe instead. To go further in a Eurosceptic direction now would mean that we will lose the next election as well and risk being out of office for a generation.

Europe was never going to win us this election. Even if the persistent campaign of the Eurosceptics was as popular as they claim, the gulf between the two parties was far too wide to have been bridged by John Major coming out against the single currency. Anyway, most ministers were fighting on a strongly Eurosceptic ticket, denouncing the Labour Party as being ready to sell out to Chancellor Kohl. All Eurosceptics knew that the Tories leaned furthest in that direction. Much good it did us.

The electorate can digest only a few issues during an election campaign. Because of their obsession with the single currency, the Eurosceptics never let the campaign sink its teeth into the greatest vote-winner of all, the strength of the economy. That was the Tories' strongest card, but it needed playing day after day. Instead the campaign kept on being diverted back to Europe. The single currency is indeed a vital issue, but the all-party commitment to a referendum should have made it irrelevant to this election.

Some of the sceptics genuinely thought they were tapping a hidden resource of fear among the British, who would cast their votes accordingly. They did not. For others, winning the election was never the prime object. The nation has been subjected for several months to the unedifying spectacle of would-be party leaders parading their populist distaste for Europe beneath a veneer of support for the Prime Minister. This turned the stomach of traditional Conservatives, for whom loyalty is a key virtue. We paid dearly for it.

At the root of the Tories' difficulties has been a serious miscalculation about people's basic attitude towards Europe. That error could keep us out of power for a long time to come. The sceptics have mistaken people's nagging doubts about the aims of European integration for an all-out antipathy towards the whole enterprise. The British are patriotic, doughty defenders of their sovereignty and traditional way of life. They are also pragmatic, and know that we must fight to get the best deal we can. They know that for things to stay as they are, things sometimes have to change. That readiness to change brought Margaret Thatcher to office. It kept John Major there for more than six years, and it is the only platform upon which the Conservatives will return to power in future.

Euroscepticism exists right across Europe, and so it should. It acts as a healthy check on those in positions of power. But there is one clear difference between the British and continental varieties. In Britain, Europe is seen as a threat; in other countries it is an opportunity. The option of withdrawal permeates the statements of British sceptics and underpins the logical — if unspoken — conclusion of their arguments. Elsewhere, pros and cons alike focus on how to work Europe's machinery to their own advantage.

Here is one of the greatest ironies in the history of European integration: of all EU members, the country whose ideas are closest to making the most headway in Europe. Privatisation, deregulation, flexible labour markets, sound budgetary and fiscal policies, free trade, agricultural reform and enlargement to the east were anathema to the European Community just ten years ago. They are all now mainstream policies. Never mind whether Tony Blair has bought shares in Thatcherism. The European Union itself is becoming Conservatism writ large. Even the single currency is proving a powerful incentive to bring about the structural reforms in Europe that Britain undertook in the 1980s. How bizarre that the Conservative legacy is being disowned by many in the Conservative Party, now which has a European label.

Europe divides both major parties. Only by drawing the party political lines of Europe can the issues be debated in a dispassionate manner, and the Government allowed to negotiate the best deal for Britain. John Major broke his promise by promising a free vote on the single currency. The idea that this should become the norm on all European issues has much to commend it.

Now is the crucial time to influence events in Europe. Britain must channel its energy into securing the enlargement of the EU. It must push for reforms that will make a wider EU more workable, whilst safeguarding its own prominent place in decision-making. These are major British aims, for which deals must be struck and, if necessary, concessions made. We must start seeing Europe, not as a federalist conspiracy, but as a hugely serious game of national interest that Britain can win, if it plays its cards right.

The author is Vice-President of the European Commission.

And he's off

HEARTENING news comes from the Foreign Office, where Robin Cook has been quick to make his mark. The Foreign Secretary, a man of the turf to the tips of his brogues, broke off his first briefing by officials on European policy to watch the races.

Just 24 hours after his appointment, Cook adjourned a lengthy meeting on the forthcoming inter-governmental conference, picked



Cook: dead cert

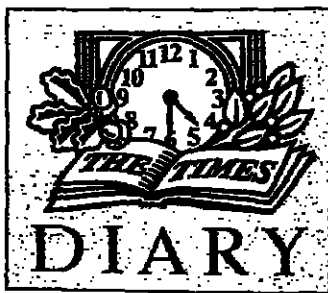
up his form book and turned to the telly for the Pertemps Two Thousand Guineas at Newmarket.

"The meeting had lasted for two hours," Cook says, "and I knew it would run and run, so at 3pm I politely asked the parliamentary under-secretary and his colleagues to leave the room for half an hour so that I could enjoy the big race on television."

At the Foreign Office yesterday, staff were mugging up on the horses so as to be able to suck up to their new boss, whose selection for the race, Revoque, narrowly failed to land a double.

Cook plans to continue as racing tipster for The Herald in Glasgow, to which he was filing copy within two hours of being appointed Foreign Secretary. On arriving the next morning at the Foreign Office, he ordered his secretary to cancel some tabloids and order The Sporting Life.

Home Office staff should never go hungry. Jack Straw, the new minister, has announced through the Central Office of Information that one of his recreations is



"cooking puddings". Satisfyingly public school puns, too. "He likes to make meringues, treacle tarts, rotty-poly and spotted dick," explains his secretary.

Flying party

PALMA. Majorca, is a place best avoided for the next day or so. A plane-load of Referendum Party and Natural Law Party supporters are in full cry there, enjoying a beano courtesy of Thomson Holidays. Thomson advertised a free holiday and flight on a chartered plane for 280 losing election candidates and spouses on a first-come, first-served basis. The frightful RP crowd, along with fanatical yogies, were first off the mark for the four-day junket, which finishes on

Thursday. Conservatives were apparently too dumbstruck by their defeat even to apply.

Starry-eyed

STUDIO 54, the notorious 1970s Manhattan nightclub where drugs went down like sherbet and rock stars grappled with duchesses on the floors of unisex bathrooms, is to reopen in Soho.

Ian Schrager, who owned the original Studio 54 and now runs



"Could you ask the Minister of Sport to close his door?"

some wining modern hotels in New York, says in Harpers & Queen that he wants to open a new version in Soho.

In its heyday, the studio attracted the likes of Andy Warhol, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Mick Jagger, Truman Capote and Liza Minelli. Its centrepiece was a neon moon guzzling cocaine from a moving spoon. Not quite the place for beers with Chris Evans, Gazza and Danny Baker.

No danger of flamboyance with Alistair Darling, who as the new Chief Secretary to the Treasury will be the Government's top financial screw. Yesterday lunchtime he was seen in the freshly done-up Strangers' cafeteria in the Commons, where he bought a cup of tea and moved to a table, only to dig out a packet of home-made sandwiches.

Bleak picture

GLOOM ALL ROUND as the latest official portrait of the Prince of Wales is unveiled today. In the portrait by Michael Noakes, the Prince is standing at the door of his Highgrove drawing-room looking glum. Noakes, who was commissioned by the Royal College of



Prince Charles: downhearted

Psychiatrists, defends his portrait saying: "I've shown a man with intelligence who has a sad side to his life. I am not implying that the Prince of Wales lacks a sense of humour. During one session I spit paint on my spectacles and he could hardly control himself."

P-H-S



CREDIBILITY IN THE BANK

Now Labour can resist the lure of the single currency

Gordon Brown, the new Chancellor, has hit the ground not so much running as sprinting. On the second business day since Labour formed the Government, he announced the biggest change in economic policy since the pound joined the exchange-rate mechanism. His plan to give the Bank of England the power to set interest rates came in a dawn raid that left heads spinning in the City, Fleet Street and Westminster.

Labour had hinted at reforming the Bank in its manifesto. But nowhere did the party propose to make it almost wholly independent from the Government. Indeed, Mr Brown often said that any decision on independence would have to follow an assessment of the Bank's long-term track record in giving policy advice. This assessment now seems to have been made in Opposition with a view to instant independence in Government. But that was never made clear.

It is easy, however, to see why the option is attractive to a Labour Chancellor and might be attractive to a country facing a term (or maybe two) of the party in power. Every Labour Government has been the victim of a sterling crisis. Just as Britain's departure from the ERM in 1992 marked the beginning of the end for the Major administration, so did the devaluations of 1931, 1949, 1967 and 1976 toll the death bell for those Labour Governments. Taking monetary policy out of the hands of the Chancellor and giving it to the Bank of England makes such disasters less likely.

The new arrangement should lead to more stable monetary policy. It will improve the Government's credibility in the markets — as evidenced by yesterday's rise in gilt prices. That should help to bring interest rates generally lower. But it will also help Mr Brown's credibility with his own party. If his MPs clamour for higher spending he will be able to explain that the Bank will simply raise interest rates to punitive levels if he runs a loose fiscal policy.

But there are dangers too. An independent Bank will be tasked to put low inflation

above other priorities. This is fine when the economy is growing. But what would the Bank have done in September 1992, when the recession-hit country desperately needed lower interest rates in order to recover? Inflation was then at 3.6 per cent, more than a point above the Bank's current target. Would it have had the imagination to cut rates regardless?

An even bigger danger looms. This step could be seen as the precursor to Britain joining the single currency. Mr Brown was at pains to point out yesterday that it was "highly unlikely" he would join in 1999. But making the Bank of England independent is a step that would have to be taken first.

This form of independence does not in itself, however, chime with European demands. The Bank of England will not set its own inflation target; that will be decided by the Government. And the Chancellor will both appoint his own people to the monetary committee determining interest rates and send a representative from the Treasury to sit in on the meetings. To make the Bank conform with the Maastricht criteria would require extra legislation.

Indeed, it could be argued that an independent Bank of England makes British membership of a single currency less likely. Some of Labour's enthusiasm for EMU rests on the very desire to hand over responsibility for the currency to a more disciplined outside force; that has already been achieved by yesterday's move. If a Labour Chancellor does not trust himself — or does not expect the markets to trust him — to run the economy prudently, he is right to look for a prop. An independent Bank of England is a far superior prop than EMU would be.

The interest rate for a single currency will be set with regard to the average performance of its members' economies. As we saw in the ERM, these rates could be wholly inappropriate for an individual country in the system. At least the Bank of England will be looking at the British economy alone when it sets interest rates. Mr Brown has gone this far; he need go no further.

THE GOLD CONFERENCE

An early sign of Labour's foreign policy approach

At first glance it might seem odd that, with such a crowded foreign policy agenda, one of the first decisions taken by Robin Cook deals with an issue already more than 50 years old. Yet his announcement yesterday that Britain is to host an international conference later this year on Nazi gold may be more than just the swift implementation of a pre-election promise to Greville Janner, a former Labour MP. Mr Cook wants also to signal that moral considerations will be further to the front of British foreign policy.

The conference will be part historical, part policy-making. The aim is to bring together all the experts and historians who have uncovered the uncomfortable facts that wartime allies and neutrals have tried to suppress. It will also bring together the Swiss Government and Jewish groups, the two sides whose initial antagonism was making Nazi gold a new source of bitterness and recriminations. Switzerland has now set in train a thorough examination of its bank records and has promised a substantial sum in payment to organisations helping the victims of the Holocaust. Jewish groups, in turn, have abated their calls for a boycott of Swiss banks.

The conference, however, need not focus on blame or guilt. No one is now alive who took the original decisions that now appear so callous and so uninformed by moral sensibility. Questions of later cover-ups by banks and European foreign ministry officials will, however, need to be examined. The Foreign Office yesterday produced a second volume of historical notes on the gold issue. It is a succinct and well-rounded account which gives stark evidence of the

compromises, confusion and bureaucratic insensitivity that characterised the allied gold dealings after the war.

Representatives of the Allies well knew that the bars of gold found in Germany probably contained metal wrenched from the teeth of concentration camp victims. They admitted that this was a "problem" in the callous parlance of the time. Yet they decided that for ease of accounting they would classify all tainted bars as "monetary gold" rather than gold for which restitution should be made to victims. Even in the early postwar years, when Europe was numbed by the horrors uncovered after victory, these were nasty decisions.

Mr Cook rightly insisted that all Foreign Office records should be made available; the Americans, who will later this week publish the results of their researches, have also insisted on opening up to scrutiny hundreds of thousands of official documents. The findings may be embarrassing, even shameful. But it is right to publish them.

Malcolm Rifkind was also sympathetic to calls for greater light on this dark issue. But Mr Cook has, in his first working day in office, made clear that it is not only in historical matters that the Foreign Office must show more transparency. Nor is the moral dimension to be confined to the past: human rights are set to be a touchstone of Labour policy, affecting arms sales, relationships with rogue states and doubtless a mass of hard cases. But, as the gold issue has demonstrated, it is all too easy to take bureaucratic policy decisions that wholly ignore the need for justice to victims. That is as true today as it was in 1945.

AN ORANGE READ

Here is a shortlist that gives literary prizes a good name

The literary world offers glittering prizes to all and sundry. There is the Booker, the Whitbread, the Somerset Maugham, the Thumping Good Read; the list goes on and on. Last year the name of Orange was added to this roll, reviled in some quarters and revered in others for selecting not by nationality but by sex: women only, please. "Outrageous," said some; "wouldn't be tolerated the other way round," "Redressing a balance," said the rest; "about time, too." And then there were those who wondered what purpose yet another book prize might serve. Why should the tastes of a few cloistered judges dictate what we ought to read?

For readers, prizes do not dictate. Prizes draw attention, prizes suggest what might — out of what is now more than 100,000 books published in this country in a year — delight a bookshop browser. Would Kate Atkinson's engaging novel, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*, have reached the thousands it did if it had not won the Whitbread Prize in 1996? Would Helen Dunmore's beautiful and chilling *A Spell of Winter* have entranced so many had she not been the worthy first winner of the Orange Prize?

Now it is Orange time again, and the judges have produced their new shortlist. The first striking aspect of this year's crop is that four of the six are North Americans: one of the prize's founders believes this is evi-

dence of a reluctance on the part of some British publishers to back British women writers. That is debatable; it is, however, certainly evidence of the extraordinary power and polish of women now writing in the United States and Canada. Each of these four novels (two of them first efforts) displays the kind of imagination rare in any novelist, male or female, from Margaret Atwood's exploration of the mind of a 19th-century madress, to Jane Mendelsohn's soaring recreation of icon and aviatrix Amelia Earhart. Anne Michaels sweeps the reader through postwar Poland and present day Greece; E. Annie Proulx traces the immigrants' path with their common possession, a six-button squeezebox. Perhaps the British should not be surprised that their vast former colonies, possessed of such a splendid literary heritage, have come into their own.

Also worth noting — if one can manage to put aside the fuss about women-only prizes, or British prizes dominated by the un-British — is that this list, overall, is one that would give any Booker shortlist a run for its money: the writers' sex is quite beside the point. With Manda Scott's gripping Glasgow tale of genetic crime, and Deirdre Madden's penetrating look at the Troubles in Northern Ireland, here are six books that should send every reader scurrying out to library and shop. Fine writing is alive and well and rewarded in Britain.

Tax and interest under Labour

From Mr George Guise

Sir, It is characteristic that both the CBI and Ken Livingstone are calling for tax rises within three days of the election, whereas the Institute of Directors is not (reports, May 5).

The CBI predominantly comprises large, bureaucratised organisations with a weather eye always out for state support, either from manipulated exchange and interest rates, defence contracts, or even direct injection of taxpayers' money in the cause of something called "UK plc". By contrast, the IoD membership consists predominantly of lean, market-driven businesses which only ask that governments leave them alone.

Tax rises are never a good idea. They do not take pressure out of an economy, except in the sense that a mail takes pressure out of a tyre. They are the last resort of a defeated economist and new Labour should never forget what old Labour discovered by experience: that high taxation and concealed unemployment are the twin killer viruses of a modern economy and lead straight to the opposition benches.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE GUISE
(Prime Minister's Policy Unit,
1986-90),
90 Longacre, WC2,
May 5.

From Mr Richard Dawson

Sir, The Chancellor, at today's meeting with the Governor of the Bank of England, has virtually put him in full control of interest rates. I trust that he will not now abdicate all responsibility for inflation, when he has a ready remedy to hand.

The choice between interest rate and taxation as the means to control inflation could be resolved if interest were made liable to a VAT-like tax at a special and easily variable rate, and which could be manipulated so as to have the same impact as an alteration in interest rates.

This would enable the Chancellor to increase effective internal interest rates to control inflation without having any effect on the sterling exchange rate. As VAT is reclaimable by industry this would not damage investment by business.

Treasury borrowing costs would not rise, as they do when interest rates rise, and effectively would fall as the Treasury would be the recipient of the extra VAT. It would, of course, still be possible to influence exchange rates by interest rate changes, possibly neutralising the internal effect by an opposite movement of VAT.

The tax would be progressive in nature. Borrowers would be paying no more than they would have done had interest rates increased, while lenders (who are likely to be the better off) would receive less interest than would otherwise have been the case.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD DAWSON,
Kings Farm,
Pebmarsh, Halstead, Essex,
May 6.

From Mr Howard Mitchell

Sir, Anatole Kalesky ("Labour must soften sterling to avoid devaluation later", *Business*, May 2) advocates the reduction of demand by increasing taxation as an alternative to raising interest rates.

Would it not be better for credit card companies (and other lenders) to restrict credit and to increase the minimum monthly repayment to say 20 per cent of the outstanding debt?

Yours faithfully,
HOWARD MITCHELL,
Hilltop House,
208 The Hill, Burford, Oxfordshire.

From Mrs Georgina Harrison

Sir, If domestic-fuel taxes need to be harmonised with Europe (report, May 6), should not beer taxes be harmonised too? It is crazy that brewers have to take trays to Calais for the black-market vans to bring the beer back.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGINA HARRISON,
Castle Farmhouse, Odell, Bedford,
May 6.

Major's future

From Mr Peter D. J. Wood

Sir, Could not the MCC consider Mr John Major for their president the next time this post falls vacant?

He is ideally suited and qualified in so many ways, not least in his devotion to the noble game, and although the office would bring no monetary rewards I have a sneaking feeling that Mr Major might even consider it a greater honour than being Prime Minister.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,
P. D. J. WOOD,
2 St John's Road, Sevenoaks, Kent,
May 3.

At last

From Mr Keith Clough

Sir, I realised over the weekend that Mr Major's elusive feel-good factor has returned.

Yours sincerely,
KEITH CLOUGH,
15 Sutton Wick Lane,
Drayton, Abingdon, Oxfordshire,
May 5.

'Dream tickets' on offer to the Tories

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

From Mr J. F. Penley

Sir, I believe that sleaze and disunity among Conservative MPs and candidates were the major factors which fuelled the nation's overwhelming desire for a change of government.

Leadership candidates do not appear even to have paused to consider whether their unrepresentative and now discredited electoral college is the appropriate body to choose a new party leader. How for instance are the views of the Scottish and Welsh Conservatives going to be canvassed, and which English MP is going to take notice of them anyway?

Yours etc,
J. F. PENLEY,
Longmead, Rockstoves,
Uley, Dursley, Gloucestershire,
May 5.

From Mr Robert Low

Sir, The choice of a new leader of the Conservative Party should not be restricted to 165 MPs. This is an absurdly low and unrepresentative sample of the party, thanks to last week's electoral debacle.

Mrs Thatcher won the support of nearly 40 more in 1990 yet was widely considered not to have gained sufficient backing to continue. Surely the selection of the next leader should be opened up to a wider electorate. Why not one party member, one vote?

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT LOW,
33 Canfield Gardens, NW6,
May 5.

From Mr Tim Russell

Sir, John Redwood's attempt today to distance himself from last Thursday's result beggars belief ("I can't defend the past: I can defend the party"). The Conservatives had one chance to present a united front to the nation when John Major resigned as leader of the party in 1995. Had no one stood against him and the party rallied round him, the general election would probably not have been the humiliation it was.

Mr Redwood's posturing and his all too obvious personal ambition since his defeat in 1995 in no small measure continued to present the press with the opportunity of displaying the Conservatives as a hopelessly divided party.

What the party now needs is some vision and a complete break from the past. The City Editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* (May 4) has already identified the man who, in my opinion, could provide a truly credible leadership alternative to Mr Blair at the next

election: Mr Archie Norman, Chairman of Asda plc and the new member for Tunbridge Wells. His lack of political experience may also be his biggest strength.

Yours faithfully,
TIM RUSSELL,
39 Ormiston Grove, W12,
May 6.

From Sir Jeremy Elwes

Sir, It is widely accepted that the disunity apparent in the Conservative Government over the last five years was a major factor in its failure to be re-elected.

As the only senior figure who challenged John Major as leader during that period, how can you possibly describe John Redwood as "untainted" (headline, later editions)?

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY ELWES,
Crispian Cottage,
Weald Road, Sevenoaks, Kent,
May 6.

From Mr Robert C. Seckts

Sir, New Conservatives searching for a dream ticket need surely look no further than Kent for Michael Howard and Ann Widdecombe.

Yours truly,
ROBERT SECKTS,
Thorpe House, 18/20 London Road,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

From Mr John Hardy

Sir, In your editorial today you review the claims of Messrs Clarke, Redwood, Howard, Hague and Lilley to the mantle of the Tory leadership.

Your front-page headline on Monday April 28 proclaimed "Portillo and Heseltine would fight for crown".

A case of a week is a long time in politics?

Yours sincerely,
JOHN HARDY,
3 Raymond Buildings,
Gray's Inn, WC1,
May 6.

From Mr C. E. Crace

Sir, Could Mr Douglas Hogg be persuaded to "throw his hat into the ring"? I do not particularly want him to become leader of the Conservative Party, but it would be nice to see the last of his hat.

Yours faithfully,
C. E. CRACE,
Lodge Farm, Little Hadham,
Ware, Hertfordshire,
May 6.

EU and environment

From Mr Michael Welbank

Sir, Lord Cranbrook is right to draw attention to the environmental implications of EU enlargement (letter, April 25) and the opportunities that the incoming UK President of the EU Council will have to make a distinctive British contribution on this issue.

Pollution is no respecter of national boundaries and the creation of a Europe-wide approach to environmental issues is one of the great EU success stories, whatever the difficulties in application.

The danger in any enlargement debate is that economic considerations will be separated from environmental issues. That is a recipe for disaster.

But to require countries from Cen-

tral and Eastern Europe to achieve EU environmental standards as a precondition for entry is unrealistic, in practical and financial terms. What can be done however is to require the close integration of economic and environmental issues at all levels and the establishment of robust and effective land-use planning systems.

A further requirement is transparency and openness in setting out the environmental implications of all policies. This will not hinder economic growth but can guide it to avoid environmental disasters and to advance environmental standards.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL WELBANK,
(President, Royal Town Planning Institute, 1993-94),
24 South Hill Park, NW3,
April 29.

Taylor's justice

From Mr Leo Blair

Sir, May I add to your obituary of the late Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor of Gosford (April 30), an incident which shows how generous and kind he was to those who were not able to help themselves?

As a practising barrister, I suffered a "stroke" on July 4, 1964. Some years later I was fortunate to be able to do reasonably easy legal tasks. The Chairman of Durham Quarter Sessions gave me the opportunity of acting Clerk to the Court: reading out charges, dealing with jurors, etc. All simple work.

Sometimes, because I did miss the real work of a barrister, I would go into the Bar "robing room" and chat

with other friends from the Bar. One day, an older barrister told me that "as a clerk" I was not allowed to hold conversations in the robing room unless I was giving information about "the list" [of cases to be heard]. I was very embarrassed.

Peter Taylor was there and gave him a real dressing down, telling him: "Leo is a practising barrister and is not only entitled to come in but is welcomed by all of us."

I have never forgotten this example of Lord Taylor's fair and honourable treatment of all who had the good fortune to know him.

Yours faithfully,
LEO BLAIR,
19 Kenton Drive,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire,
May 1.

Hogging the road

From Mr Hector Stevens

Sir, I sympathise with Mr Robert Mudie's frustrations when driving (letter, May 6).

Whenever I am walking through London in no great hurry, I find myself being constantly jostled by speeding pedestrians barging their way through the crowds trying to arrive somewhere yesterday.

However, whenever I am in a hurry I invariably find the pavements littered with wandering sloths whose sole aim in life seems to be to get in the way.

Yours faithfully,
J. H. STEVENS,
112 Old Woking Road,
Pyrford, Woking, Surrey,
May 6.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046.

Community value of urban cinemas

From the Chief Executive of ABC Cinemas

Sir, Unseasonal as it may have been lately to applaud the efforts of politicians, praise should go to John Gummer, the erstwhile Secretary of State for the Environment, and to Andrew Bennett, Labour MP for Denton and Reddish and Chairman of the House of Commons Environment Committee, for their support of the traditional town centre.

John Gummer recently turned down planning permission for yet another out-of-town multiplex cinema with attached fast food restaurants, at Eastleigh in Hampshire. The Environment Committee's recent report on shopping centres called, amongst other things for a tax on out-of-town car parks.

Out-of-town multiplex cinemas with their adjacent facilities are now, rightly, an important part of the cinema scene in this country. However, we clearly do not have the space that exists in the US, where the idea originated, to allow their unchecked growth.

The myth has grown, perpetuated by developers, that the smaller multiplex cinema, located in town and with its own attached fast-food facilities, is somehow not commercially viable. I can emphatically deny this. ABC is one of the best established brands in the cinema industry, with more in-town sites than any other, and provides an effective and financially sound service to local communities.

Urban cinemas have an important place as a cultural feature of our towns and cities, which government policy has hitherto supported. The Conservative Government's stricter application of planning policy will have done much to enhance the vitality of town centres. We hope the new Government will ensure their continuing social and environmental value.

Yours faithfully,
BARRY JENKINS,
Chief Executive,
ABC Cinemas,
80 Great Portland Street, W1,
May 2.

Too many cats

From Mrs Denise Helps

Sir, The cat population of this country will continue to increase, to the detriment of wildlife, until cat owners are made to take responsibility for their pets (letters, April 25, 28, May 6).

At present cats appear to be the only domestic animals permitted to stray at will on public land and private property other than that of their owners. No wonder these owners find them attractive and convenient.

Nesting birds and pondlife are as much a beloved feature of some people's gardens as plants, and merit protection. I cannot imagine the same level of tolerance if sheep came and browsed on our flowers and shrubs, and I am sure Ms Digby Smith (letter, April 28) would not want me to release my dog unsupervised in her garden. He would certainly chase, and possibly kill, any cats she may own; but she need not be distressed as he would only be doing what comes naturally.

Recent years have seen a very successful policy on pollution of our streets and parks by dog faeces. The introduction of a similar restriction on cats is long overdue.

Yours faithfully,
DENISE HELPS,
Chately Farm House, Tellisford Lane,
Norton St Philip, Bath.

From Mrs Simon Wainman

Sir, When our famous mouse, Winky, reached the grand age of 18 last May, she decided to retire. As a result we were overrun by mice. But since the autumn, when a pair of kestrels moved into the area, she has been able to spend her time between the Aga and the best conservatory sun-chair knowing that her job is being done very efficiently by someone else.

Yours faithfully,
DIANA WAINMAN,
Upper Ashe House,
Ashe, Basingstoke, Hampshire,
May 6.

Too close for comfort?

From the Reverend J. H. Graham

Sir, BT's "Friends and Family" promotion brings great anxiety to those who work from home. Should I win the "Reunion" prize, I will end up on an exotic island with, among others, my archdeacon.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES GRAHAM,
The Rectory, Hodnet,
Market Drayton, Shropshire.

Holiday help

From Dr Norman Dyson

Sir, I have just realised how to solve the drought. Make every Monday a bank holiday until all the reservoirs are full. If necessary, marshal families with small children into seaside resorts. The authorities could vary the deluge by controlling the opening of shops and public entertainment for the day.

Yours faithfully,
N. DYSON,
The Croft, Kellfield Avenue,
Low Fell, Tyne and Wear,
May 6.

BRIGADIER MICHAEL HARBOTTLE

Harbottle briefing the Defence Secretary Denis Healey, while on UN duty in Cyprus in 1968

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mitted in Gloucestershire from London shows what the car was beginning to do. Twenties to those bent on mischief.

It narrowly escaped a collision with a car, which was at once pulled over. Moments later a crash was heard as the car bent in the road; the police car had been unable to take the turn. The car, which had turned up the footpath, had turned over. Two of the occupants were killed and the car and when extricated was found to be dead.

near my and saw the accident
knocked down by the car, saw

badly, having
bodies of the two
the mortuary at

Three men were taken by the officer in uniform, in a field in the area where they had been attempting to escape. They offered no resistance and were unarmed. Their ages were in their 20s, 30s and 40s. One was apparently lost

been identified as
Rupert Walters,
toll.

that his car had

Finding a morality to fill a vacuum

The other major cause of offence, according to the BSC's new report, is the depiction of homosexuality as normal. That grievance I'll have to leave to the others. Homosexuality seems to me no more contagious than heterosexuality. But swearing, everybody knows, is catching. Simply switching off soap operas would save many in the audience from the shocks that they complain about, such as the woman who protested that 5.55pm is too early for premature ejaculation (an affliction hinted at on *Neighbours*). What can viewers expect if they want to see family sagas dragged out over three, four or five nights of a week? The poor writers have to throw in the whole *Krafft-Ebbing* kit to keep the plot going.

Oh, but it does. The BSC has to carry on doing just what it did before April 1 when new legislation tucked the old Broadcasting Complaints Commission into it: listen to complaints which, by and large, it does not uphold. Taste has moved on. A large part of the audience simply has been outvoted. But it needs a shoulder to cry on.

Michael Jackson, Channel 4's new chief executive, has the easiest job in British broadcasting. He joins a channel with a firm sense of identity, sound finances and the confidence that if the viewers squawk, the channel is only fulfilling its remit.

Pity the BBC he leaves behind, like a crumbling country house which cannot attract new staff. To know why a new head of drama has been so hard to find, you could listen to Peter Anso, Channel 4's own head of drama, boast that neither Michael Grade nor John Willis, the director of programmes, ever asked to read a script before he commissioned a play. Perhaps the BBC could find a management consultant to tell it to leave creative people alone.



Rock solid

HEART FM, the London-based rock music station, is no match for terrorists. The station continued broadcasting last Thursday afternoon, despite receiving a bomb threat connected with a suspicious-looking vehicle parked in the vicinity of its west London



inmate at Birmingham Prison studios in Birmingham, where *The Archers* is recorded, confesses that Allen has appeared in the series before, playing the role of the police officer who arrested Susan Carter in October 1993 after she gave shelter to her brother, Clive Horrobin, when he was on the run from the law.

He recalls internationally appealing subjects of the past, such as Andy Warhol and Jean Genet, and the fact that the *South Bank Show* had the last major interview with Simone de Beauvoir.

LWT, which has now signed another distributor for the programme, commented: "We decided in this cut-throat commercial world to explore other avenues for selling the *South Bank Show*."

A KEY exercise in whether creative ideas can travel is about to take place. Tango's mould-breaking approach to advertising is about to be exported to China. A new TV commercial has been devised in collaboration with World Writers, which specialises in adapting ads for foreign markets. An insider says: "It's still wacky but not as wacky as the British work."



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Michael Jackson, newly appointed successor to Michael Grade, has been discussing his plans. Carol Midgley reports

An information junkie takes over at Channel 4

The announcement that Michael Jackson is to become the chief executive of Channel 4 put an immediate and intriguing question mark over one of its best-loved executives.

No sooner had the news filtered out that Michael Grade's successor had at last been chosen, than staff at Channel 4 were asking whether it spelt the potential loss of John Willis.

Willis, the genial director of programmes at Channel 4 who made no secret of his own desire to get the job, is expected to make a decision about his future when he returns from holiday tomorrow. He once clashed, openly with Jackson, director of television and controller of BBC1 and previously of BBC2, accusing him of being the "copycat criminal of British television".

During the spat in 1995, Willis accused Jackson, 39, of turning BBC2 into a mirror image of Channel 4, showing disregard for viewers by scheduling similar programmes in head to head clashes.

But if Mr Jackson harbours any grudge about the attack, he was hiding it well yesterday when he spoke about his appointment for the first time. Jackson, the whipper-thin son of a baker who is tipped to be the next director-general of the BBC, made it clear that he would like Willis to remain, but it was not apparent whether Willis himself will wish to. Staff at Channel 4 say that if rumours about Willis leaving are true, they will have lost one of their most approachable and talented executives.

"I have a great deal of respect for John," Jackson told a theatre full of journalists yesterday. "Talking to people at Channel 4 over the weekend I was struck by the

huge amount of affection there is for him. I am going to sit down with John when he gets back and talk to him about the future. I'm looking forward to that and I hope to have a good relationship with him."

Of the charge that he was a copycat of Channel 4, he said: "I refuted it then and I still refute it now."

Some insiders believe Willis, who spent 19 years at Yorkshire TV before moving to Channel 4 in 1988, may have missed out on the job because he had spent 24 years almost exclusively in factual programming. It may have been decided that he had not fully developed the innovative flair needed to oversee arts and entertainment programmes. Willis has presided over some of the best documentaries on television and founded, among other series, *Cutting Edge*.

Most, however, believe Jackson — "Well it could have been worse, I could have been called George Michael" — is very good news for Channel 4 with a proven record of talent, experience and innovative thought.

Although less of a colourful and outspoken figure than his predecessor, Michael Grade, he was without doubt one



Antagonists or just good colleagues? John Willis, left, Michael Jackson



of the BBC's brightest stars. Jackson, who is famously said to have taken off his shoes and walked over his office furniture during BBC meetings, is described as an "information junkie" about most aspects of television. As a child he is said to have

played at being a TV scheduler.

David Cardiff, his tutor at the Central London School of Communication, where he graduated with first-class honours in media studies, said Jackson had sized up the entire industry even as a student. He

had written a dissertation on Channel 4 before Channel 4 had started.

The broadcaster Muriel Gray, who worked with him on Channel 4's *The Media Show*, described him as a leader uninterested in hierarchies and pecking orders.

"His whole life is a quest for information," she says. "He was more interested in making programmes than snarling up to people, so I am surprised he has risen so high so fast."

Jackson has explained that his obsession for detail is to compensate for his non-cultural upbringing. "Because I grew up in a house without books in it and because I didn't go into an art gallery before I was 18, I had to be self taught, had to be curious," he says.

"People who come from an Oxbridge background are often very well informed but not at all curious, and curiosity is the important thing."

Yesterday Jackson admitted that it had been difficult to leave the BBC. "Yes I did have a great job and I loved the people I worked with. I have been supportive of the changes that have taken place there. It was a real wrench to leave but this is

the best job in British broadcasting. I feel a great attachment to the channel."

His arrival may signal the end of certain shows which he has criticised for appealing to "young, lager-drinking, upwardly mobile men" at the expense of originality. These are, however, unlikely to include *Eurotrash*, of which Jackson yesterday declared himself a fan, and Chris Evans's *TFI Friday* which he described as "one of the best entertainment shows on television".

Jackson, openly a critic of Channel 4's late night *Girly Show*, indicated he would defend Channel 4's reputation for putting out controversial programmes but acknowledged mistakes had been made. The channel has recently been criticised for offending public taste with programmes such as *Brookside* and *TFI Friday*.

"If you have got something wrong, hold your hands up and admit it," he said. "If there is something that you passionately believe is right, then defend it. I think the channel has a good record of doing that in the past. I have no problems with programmes that are rude, as long as they are innovative and distinctive, as long as they are good shows."

The relationship with television watchdogs should be "one of candid self-criticism", he said.

Sir Michael Bishop, Channel 4's chairman, said: "Michael brings a wealth of talent and experience from his position at the BBC. I think it is marvellous that someone who was so vociferous in the campaign to establish Channel 4 in his very early career is coming as its chief executive."

Michael Jackson takes up the position on June 1.

Champions of children's radio bid for air time

Support is growing for a station dedicated to young listeners, says Gillian Thomas

Once upon a time, stories for children were an important part of BBC Radio, along with plays, features, talks, quizzes and music — all of which were specially designed for them. But as television grew in popularity, Broadcasting House gradually abandoned them.

The daily *Children's Hour* was axed in 1964 and *Children's Favourites*, the Saturday morning request programme, in 1967. *Listen with Mother* stopped in 1982. Now, apart from schools programmes transmitted in the middle of the night for teachers to record, there is only one regular slot for children of any age: a half-hour drama on Radio 4 on Sundays at 7pm.

Yet under-15s make up 20 per cent of the population. Furthermore Article 17 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that the mass media should "disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to children". That clearly includes radio.

For all those who still regard it as an important medium for children, a window of opportunity has now opened up. A radio station called Children's Radio UK is among proposals for the future use of 225 kHz long-wave which had to be submitted to the Radio Authority by March 31.

The frequency was originally allocated to the BBC but never used, so the Department of National Heritage passed it to the Radio Authority for a fourth national independent radio service, alongside Classic FM, Virgin Radio and Talk Radio.

Though most industry insiders still expect the winner to be a sports channel, the proposal for Children's Radio UK is gathering support. It plans to address four age groups: under-3s, 4-7s, 8-11s and 12-16s. Its aim is to encourage learning "through discovery and enjoyment". Help-lines, a website and full multi-media materi-

al would be provided to support the programmes.

The driving force behind it is Susan Stranks, an actress who was a presenter of Thames TV's *Maggie* in the 1970s and also had her own series, *Paperplay*, she and her husband, Robin Ray, the musicologist and broadcaster, have an 18-year-old son.

For six years, she has been campaigning to restore children's radio, attracting support from such varied figures as Penelope Leach, Claire Rayner, Lord Rix and Baroness Warnock.

In 1995 she set up Children 2000, a voluntary organisation that aims to help focus Lottery and Millennium funding on the needs of children. Its Children's Radio Charter calls for quality programmes made specially for them, not merely as entertainment but also to help them develop their learning skills.

"Children have been abandoned in radio's rush to segregate itself into 'adult' chat or chart-driven formats," she says.

"The time has come to reinvent it with programmes that will attract children of the 21st century."

Children's Radio UK would cover everything from rhythm and rhyme to health, careers and money-management. Some programmes would be designed to be heard in play-groups and schools as well as at home. Special-needs would be catered for too.

Susan Stranks argues that the benefits of investing even a tiny percentage of the money being spent on nursery and primary schooling would be enormous.

"Alphabet, speech, tables and movement are learnt much faster with the help of music, stories and rhymes," she says. "But primary schools are often short of texts or lack teachers who can play an instrument."



Children's favourites: campaigners want a return to special broadcasting for young listeners, abandoned in the rush for adult chat and chart formats

A MORI survey carried out in 1993-94 by Pam Enderby, now a professor at Sheffield University, showed that one in five under-5s had communication difficulties.

"When children watch television, the vision and sound compete for their attention and they tend to be distracted by what they see," she says. "Radio helps them learn to attend and listen."

In May 1994 Dr Sally Ward of the Hearing, Speech & Language Centre in London reported that the commonest single developmental difficulty in the pre-school years was auditory perception. In the majority of cases the cause was the child's lack of "selection auditory attention" — in other words they were not listening properly.

Provisional start-up and running costs for the service are estimated to be around £44 million for the first four years. This would cover operations on 225 kHz as well as the associated digital band which is likely to be a condition of taking it up.

Funding would be sought from the National Lottery, Independent Radio, the BBC licence fee, local education authorities and other commercial and charitable sponsors.

"Children's programmes disappeared from radio because they were not considered to be cost-effective, yet as a medium of communication it is unique," says Susan Stranks. "It adds a room to every home and to lock children out is indefensible."

No such thing as a silent politician

Journalists see so much mendacity and hypocrisy in public life — ministers who say one thing and think another — that most are deeply cynical. Which is why there was more amusement than alarm yesterday over a report from an "aide" to Tony Blair that he would frown on hunches between ministers and journalists.

Most political journalists and their editors entertain ministers and MPs at least two or three times a week, and they don't expect the lunches to stop whatever the orders from Downing Street.

By lunching politicians, journalists get the inside gossip and burnish their reputations by relaying it, unattributed, to their readers and demonstrating how well informed they are.

The deal works both ways. As well as a free meal, the politicians get an opportunity to float their policies, denounce party enemies unhindered by any obstruction from Whitehall and agenda-setting space in influential newspapers. As Michael White of *The Guardian* points out, one of the paradoxes of power is a feeling of impotence and a



need to address voters over the heads of the formal government machinery. Yet even the most cynical of journalists have been impressed by the discipline and control exercised by new Labour in opposition, especially during the six-week election campaign. Tony Bevin, the veteran political editor of *The Independent*, says it is the most all-enveloping, most disciplined political operation he has ever seen.

That is why they were not surprised, as *The Daily Telegraph* certainly was yesterday, by the "unprecedented" degree of control Tony Blair is exercising, assisted by minister without portfolio Peter Mandelson, chief of staff Jonathan Powell and press secretary Alastair Campbell, over interviews and policy pronouncements by ministers. Ministers have been in-

structed to co-ordinate all policy pronouncements through Powell; requests for interviews with ministers will be cleared through Campbell; and Mandelson — described by *The Daily Telegraph* as the "black-polo-necked Beria" (a reference to Stalin's feared security boss) — of seeing that Blair's programme is implemented throughout Whitehall.

One journalist who was certainly not surprised was Joe Haines, who had two stints as Harold Wilson's press secretary. He adopted exactly the same policy as Blair and Campbell and scorned the idea that it was "unprecedented". Under Haines, ministers were not allowed to appear on *Question Time* or *Any Questions* and one was even sacked for publishing a book on the grounds that he ought not to have had the time to write it.

With so many hands on the tiller, he foresees all the ingredients of a mess. "We never had that kind of control," he said yesterday. "We tried, but the fact is that it was ministers who resented central control from the beginning. In a fast-moving government, often working by the seat of your pants, it's just not on."

Most journalists act differently once a party is in government, he wrote earlier in *The Express*. "They are

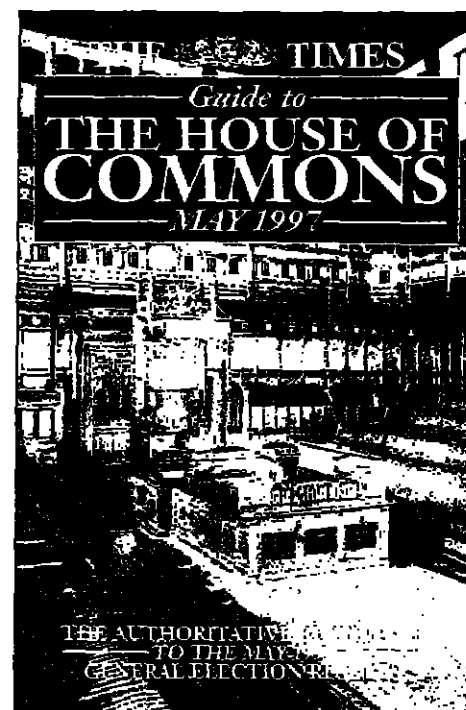
dedicated to testing Government. As a former journalist himself, Campbell is widely respected. Yet, as David Blunkett discovered from John Humphrys on the *Today* programme last Saturday, that testing to destruction will undoubtedly occur. "Alastair knows what journalists want and will no doubt be doing his best to stop us getting it — except on his terms," says Michael White of *The Guardian*. Yet, as Bevin says, the job of journalists is to cut through the control, find the weak spots and exploit them.

That testing will be at its greatest on *Today*, especially of those ministers who are suspected of being less than utterly enthusiastic about the Blair programme — which is why Downing Street will try to stop them appearing.

But as senior *Today* insiders point out, the Government will look ridiculous if ministers agree to be interviewed but are not allowed to discuss the most important issues of the day. Ministers will have to defend the Government if they want to stop the Tories making all the running. Grown-up ministers simply will not accept dictat from Downing Street.

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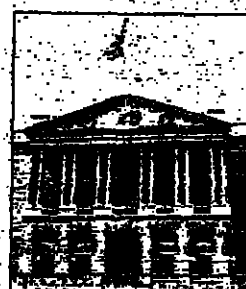
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY MAY 7 1997

Shares, sterling and gilts soar on early base rate rise and monetary shake-up

Markets welcome Brown's first moves

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

GORDON BROWN'S radical plan to overhaul the Bank of England was greeted with enthusiasm by the City yesterday, which sent the stock market and the pound to new highs.

Mr Brown, who coupled the Bank reform with a quarter-point rise in interest rates to 6.25 per cent, surprised the City with the speed and scope of his plans. Mortgage rates instantly rose, with some building societies putting up the cost by more than Mr Brown's quarter per cent.

Traders said Mr Brown had made a good start in proving himself an "iron Chancellor" and dispelling Labour's tradi-

as a "long overdue change that takes to a logical conclusion the tentative steps made since 1992." But Andrew Sentance, director of the Centre for Economic Forecasting at the London Business School and a former member of the Treasury's Panel of Independent Advisers, gave warning that the Bank of England will face a tough task in determining interest rate policy over the next two years and that much will hinge on the quality of economic advice the Bank receives from the independent members of its monetary policy committee.

Business organisations also largely welcomed both the rate rise and the reforms. The Confederation of British Industry said the changes would enhance the credibility of the UK's monetary policy and lower the cost of finance for industry by reducing the risk premium in UK interest rates.

Gilts enjoyed the biggest one-day rally for five years in what Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, described as the most radical reform of the Bank's structure in its 300-year history. The Government will continue to set inflation policy targets, but responsibility for changing interest rates will be handed to a reformed Bank of England. Mr Brown said he wanted to "remove the suspicion that short-term influences are setting interest rates" and

THE Halifax, Abbey National, Cheltenham & Gloucester and Northern Rock raised their standard mortgage rates by between 0.31 per cent and 0.38 per cent. Other lenders are expected to follow. The rises take effect immediately for new borrowers and from June 1 for existing borrowers.

The Halifax said the rise would add an extra £13.26 to the monthly mortgage bill for a homeowner with a £50,000 interest-only loan.

tional reputation as a tax and spend Government. The FT-SE 100 cleared 4,500 for the first time, closing up 67.3 at 4,519.3, although trading was relatively light. But traders said there is still some nervousness about the contents of Labour's mini-budget, planned for July.

The pound also touched a post-ERM high against the mark, climbing 2½ pence to close at DM12.8202. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose nearly a point to 100.6 while the pound gained nearly two cents to finish at \$1.6368. But some analysts said the pound could fall back after Mr Brown's comments that he wanted a "stable and competitive" pound in the medium term.

The outlook for sterling was further clouded after Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, said yesterday that he felt the current level of sterling is "uncomfortable". He added that he felt it "unlikely the pound would be sustained at these levels in the medium term — although the Bank does not make forecasts on the exchange rate."

Mr George has been widely perceived by the markets as being unconcerned about the current soaring pound.

Economists predicted the reforms would be likely to limit further interest rate rises this year, with many forecasting that rates will only rise another quarter point. John Sheppard, UK economist at Yamaichi, described the move



Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, yesterday after announcing the rise in interest rates and his plans for radical reform at the Bank of England

Bank of England to be independent

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE Bank of England is to gain operational independence in what Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, described as the most radical reform of the Bank's structure in its 300-year history.

The Government will continue to set inflation policy targets, but responsibility for changing interest rates will be handed to a reformed Bank of England. Mr Brown said he wanted to "remove the suspicion that short-term influences are setting interest rates" and

create a system that is "effective, open and accountable".

Mr Brown stopped short of fully dividing the Bank's supervisory and monetary policy roles, but said he would undertake further reforms of supervision in the near future. The Bank's reformed monetary policy committee will meet once a month and set interest rate by majority vote. Minutes of the meetings, and voting records, will be published six weeks in arrears. The Chancellor also said he

would expand the Court, the Bank's governing body, to include 16 non-executives "representative of the whole of the United Kingdom". Four new non-executives, drawn from industry, commerce and finance, are to be appointed shortly. The powers of scrutiny of the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee will be increased.

The Bank will also lose its debt-management responsibilities which will be transferred to the Treasury to

ensure there is no conflict of interest during gilt auctions. Gavyn Davies, chief international economist at Goldman Sachs, has been widely tipped for Deputy Governor. Bridget Rosewell, director of Business Strategies, and Richard Layard, a professor at the London School of Economics, are possible appointees to the monetary policy committee.

How deal was done, page 2
Pennington, page 27
Brown's revolution, page 29

Capital Radio to pay £65m for Virgin rival

By ERIC REGAN

CAPITAL RADIO eliminated one of its main competitors yesterday with an agreement to buy Richard Branson's Virgin Radio for £65 million.

Capital is to fund the acquisition by issuing 11.9 million Capital shares at 544p to the Virgin Group. It is also taking on Virgin Radio's £22 million of debt, raising the total value of the deal to £87 million. Capital shares fell 6p to 539p.

Virgin will own 14 per cent of Capital and Mr Branson will become a non-executive director. This is the first time that he has been a director of a public company since the Virgin Group, now privately owned, was floated in the 1980s. A Virgin spokesman said: "Richard agreed to become a director because he is committed to remaining a shareholder of Capital."

The Virgin Radio acquisition will allow Capital to consolidate its position as the



Branson: digital access

country's largest commercial broadcaster and the dominant force in the London market, where it owns Capital FM and Capital Gold. The addition of Virgin FM in London will raise Capital's share of the total London audience from about 23 per cent to about 27 per cent.

The City believes that Capital's

falling market share, the result of intense competition from Virgin FM and Heart FM, was behind the deal. Paul Richards, an analyst at Panmure Gordon, said: "Capital appears to be buying back market share that it has lost."

Virgin Radio, launched four years ago, consists of the Virgin FM London licence and the Virgin AM national licence. Richard Eyre, Capital's managing director, said that owning the AM licence will allow it to enter the digital audio broadcasting market quickly. Only national licenceholders have been given guaranteed space on the "multiplexes" — the blocks of frequencies assigned to digital broadcasters — that are to be created next year.

Capital reported pre-tax profits of £17 million, up 9 per cent, in the half-year to March 31. The interim dividend rises 7.5 per cent, to 4.3p.

Digital sound era, page 29

Unilever defends its social chapter stance

By OLIVER AUGUST AND PHILIP BASSETT

UNILEVER has defended its pro-European stance against shareholder charges that the Anglo-Dutch group is too eager to comply with the EU's social chapter.

Niall Fitzgerald, chairman, yesterday said that British companies had no reason to fear the changes associated with Labour's plans to abandon the British opt-out. He told the annual meeting of Unilever shareholders: "The social chapter is unjustly being used as a proxy for all undesirable Continental social habits."

In a separate move, the Confederation of British Industry signalled its willingness to work with trade unions on dealing with new proposals from Brussels on European social legislation.

Adair Turner, Director-General of the CBI, also suggested that business would be able to accept a specific mini-



Fitzgerald: chapter backer

mum wage figure, saying that business could live with an hourly minimum wage of £3.

Unilever has already accepted the social chapter for its UK businesses, guaranteeing them the same treatment as its operations in the rest of Europe. Mr Fitzgerald said that, so far, there had only been two changes as a result of this —

uniform parental leave rules and the creation of works councils. He said: "Works councils provide helpful additional channels of communication with employees."

Other British companies will not be forced to comply with the social chapter for at least a year.

Union leaders in the UK are keen to promote the idea of "social partnership", a practice widespread in Europe, in which employers and employees' leaders reach agreement on legislative and other issues.

Currently, unions and business act as social partners in considering new Europe-wide employment laws. With Labour now signing the EU social chapter, Mr Turner indicated that the CBI and the TUC might well now hold joint talks in advance of any European meetings on new social legislation to work out a common point of view if possible.

'Intense dialogue', page 26

Microsoft and Reed Elsevier in venture

By ERIC REGAN

REED Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing group, has recruited Microsoft, the world's largest software company, to accelerate its move into global electronic distribution.

Microsoft will provide Reed with the technology to allow Reed's customers to access and manage content on computer platforms. As part of the deal, Reed will use Microsoft's Commercial Internet Systems, a portfolio of commercial Internet services, to put scientific, legal, business and travel information on Internet sites.

Among other services, this will allow Reed to form information "communities", allowing lawyers, for example, to share legal information and talk to each other.

Nigel Stapleton, Reed's co-chairman, said: "By entering into wide-ranging strategic relationships with Microsoft, we expect to deliver state-of-the-art electronic information products to our customers in a more timely and efficient manner."

Reed will pay Microsoft \$30 million over five years. Bernard Vergnes, president of Microsoft Europe, called the payment "fairly insignificant" because the deal is only the start of an alliance with the potential to expand greatly as new content and technology becomes available.

Microsoft recently agreed to help Dow Jones, the publishing company that owns The Wall Street Journal, to upgrade Telebase, its ailing financial information service.

Tempus, page 28

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CBI chief sees 'intense' dialogue with Labour

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BUSINESS is likely to have a more intense dialogue with the new Labour Government than it did with the Conservatives, the head of the Confederation of British Industry said yesterday as he expressed his confidence that Labour in government will maintain its pro-business stance.

Speaking to *The Times* about business working with Labour, and business priorities for the Government, Adair Turner, Director-General of the CBI, said: "We can see there will

need to be a very intense dialogue — in some respects more than with the Conservatives."

Mr Turner was careful to praise Conservative achievements, including ending penal rates of taxation, the recreation of an entrepreneurial spirit and trade union reform, as well as more recent successes, including macro-economic stability. He lauded Kenneth Clarke as "a very good Chancellor overall", but said, too, that he believed that Gordon Brown, the new Chancellor, would "build on" Mr Clarke's achievements to maintain economic stability.

Mr Turner said: "We feel that there is a Government which has a broadly pro-business

point of view." He said that he felt "fairly confident" that Labour would maintain that pro-business position in government.

Although the CBI still opposes key Labour policies such as signing the European social chapter and introducing a national minimum wage, Mr Turner made clear that it would work with Labour to implement them in ways that offered the best advantages to business.

On the social chapter, he held out the prospect of the CBI working with the TUC to coordinate their positions ahead of Brussels making new moves on employment law. On the minimum wage, Mr Turner, for the first time,

put a figure on what might be acceptable to business by agreeing with an independent analysis published yesterday suggesting that the minimum could be as low as £3 an hour.

He confirmed that the CBI would be willing to serve on Labour's planned Low Pay Commission, to recommend a minimum wage level, and on its proposed task force on completion of the European single market.

Business's priorities for the Government included, he said, maintaining macro-economic stability and making sure that any changes such as a minimum wage were introduced in ways that did not harm flexibility or competitiveness.

Lloyd's may collect only half £600m names' debt

By JON ASHWORTH

LLOYD'S of London has conceded that it will be lucky to recover half the £600 million in outstanding debt owed by names around the world.

More than 1,300 writs have been issued with a view to squeezing funds out of non-payers, but recoveries may prove disappointing.

The admission came as Lloyd's published its annual report for 1996, disclosing that lawyers and accountants were paid £24 million last year for their work on the reconstruction and renewal programme.

Total operating costs at the Corporation of Lloyd's came to £222 million, of which £42 mil-

lion was directly attributable to reconstruction and renewal. A further £68 million was incurred in connection with Equitas, set up to reinsure 1992 and prior-year losses. The cost was borne by Equitas premiums paid by members.

The Corporation saw its deficit for the year deepen from £13.8 million in 1995 to £48.4 million in 1996 — effectively the Corporation's contribution to reconstruction and renewal.

Various fund-raising measures included the sale of Lloyd's of London Press, the sale-and-leaseback of the 1986 Lloyd's building, and the mortgaging of the 1958 building. The council sanctioned a £300 million syndicated loan, repayable over five years, on which £7.5 million in interest has been paid.

Losses on the Corporation's core activities deepened to £10 million (£4.5 million). Bob Hewes, finance director, said some of the expenditure would fall away as the number of resigning names diminished, and legal costs associated with debt recoveries were reduced. A modest surplus was budgeted for 1997.

Sir David Rowland, chairman, was the highest paid council member in 1996, receiving a non-pensionable salary of £450,000, and £18,000 in benefits, topped up with a £400,000 bonus.

Ron Sandler, the chief executive officer, saw his salary increased to £350,000 (£250,000), and received £112,500 in bonuses. He was given £87,500 (£62,500) towards his pension, and received £9,500 in benefits.

Between 50 and 60 employees across all levels received bonuses worth between £5,000 and £75,000 for their work on reconstruction and renewal.

The appeal in the so-called Clementson case, in which names alleged breaches of articles of the Treaty of Rome with respect to the Lloyd's Central Fund, was dismissed yesterday, when the plaintiffs failed to lodge a security for costs of £500,000. The order for costs was made by the Court of Appeal on March 25.

European chief quits at GGT

By JASON NISSE

GGT Group, the advertising agency, was yesterday dealt a blow only weeks after completing the £96 million purchase of BDDP when Jan Hall, GGT's European chief, unexpectedly resigned.

Ms Hall has been with GGT three years and will leave next month. Along with Mike Greenlees, chairman of GGT, and Mark Baylis, finance director, she masterminded the purchase of BDDP, which more than doubled the size of the group.

It is understood that Ms Hall's role in the group was reduced because of the increased role of Jean-Marie Dru, chairman of BDDP. Ms Hall, who earned more than £200,000 last year, is in talks about compensation.

The takeover has been dogged by defections from BDDP, the latest being the departure of Natalie Rastoin to Ogilvie & Mather.

Ms Hall's departure was announced after the markets closed.



A dispute over the late delivery of Le Shuttle rolling stock is likely to be settled for less than £100 million

Eurotunnel £1bn claim 'cut'

By JASON NISSE

EUROTUNNEL may have to settle for less than one tenth of the £1 billion it claimed from Trans Manche Line, the builders of the tunnel, for late delivery of Le Shuttle rolling stock, after a mixed decision in a ruling over the claim.

The Panel of Experts, which rules on disputes between Eurotunnel and TML, said

TML has to pay damages for the late delivery. But the Panel said TML did not have to compensate Eurotunnel for loss of revenue.

The trains and carriages, built by a consortium including Bombardier, Fiat and British Rail Engineering, cost Eurotunnel £700 million and were delivered between six and 12 months late, partly because of extra safety checks.

Eurotunnel said two years ago that it was suing for £1 billion in compensation. Yesterday it said it may press for further legal arbitration. However, talks with the ten-strong TML consortium, which includes Tarmac, Taylor Woodrow and Wimpey, on settling the level of damages are now starting.

It is expected the final payment will be under £100

million, spread between TML and the manufacturers. The £1 billion claim was trumpeted by Sir Alastair Morton, former Eurotunnel chairman, as one of the saviours of the debt-ridden group. A £2.5 billion claim against British Rail and SNCF, the French railways, was dropped last year. Details of Eurotunnel's third debt restructuring are expected in the next fortnight.

Norwich sets dealing date

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

DEALING in shares in Norwich Union will begin on June 16, bringing to an end 200 years of mutuality, it was announced yesterday.

More than 2.9 million qualifying members will have the opportunity to trade in 1.3 billion free shares on that date, Norwich Union said.

They stand to gain an average of 300 to 400 shares worth between 20p and 265p, with an initial estimated value of between £600 and £1,060. Early valuations put a tag of

£5 billion on the company. A revised forecast of the flotation price will be included in a mini-prospectus to be sent to members on May 21. That date will also mark the beginning of a book-building exercise for institutions. They will be offered a proportion of the £1.75 billion of new shares. Of this, £1.5 billion will be paid into the with-profit fund of NU's main UK life company.

About 1.8 million with-profit policyholders will net an average of £800 worth of free

shares. They will receive a minimum of 300 shares with additional shares based on the value and duration of their policies as at October 1, 1996.

A further million non-profit policyholders will receive a fixed allocation of 150 shares worth between £330 and £400.

Members need to return their application forms with payment by June 10. The minimum application for members is £400 and the maximum £100,000. The minimum for non-members is £1,000.

Shell fails to meet standards

SHELL, the Anglo-Dutch oil company facing a challenge from environmental activists at its forthcoming annual meeting, is failing to comply with environmental legislation in Nigeria.

Shell's Health, Safety and Environment Report, published today, reveals the company has yet to comply with recent legislation introduced in Nigeria which introduces standards comparable to those in the USA.

The oil company states that it is working to renew ageing facilities and to bury flowlines, most of which date from the 1960s and 1970s.

Shell faces a financial problem in Nigeria which is hindering progress towards compliance as its joint venture partner, the state oil company, has been denied sufficient government funds to meet agreed budgets. Shell said yesterday that two other developing countries, Venezuela and Egypt were expected soon to adopt US environmental standards.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Fund wins right to pursue US action

AMERICAN Endeavour, an offshore fund based in Jersey, has won the right to take its \$67 million suit against Arthur Truher, its co-founder and former manager, into the US courts. The California Court of Appeals has overturned a district court ruling last year that US courts had no jurisdiction in the case. The fund will now pursue its claims against Mr Truher and two of his companies, Berkeley International Capital Corporation (BICC) and the London Pacific Group (LPG). It alleges Mr Truher mismanaged the fund and did not disclose commissions related to junk bond investments. Between its launch in 1988 and 1995, when the fund's management was handed to Kleinwort Benson, American Endeavour lost \$35 million.

Mr Truher has filed counterclaims in Jersey and the US for damages of \$446 million. He alleges American Endeavour's action prevented his acquisition of Odfi & Phelps, a US fund manager, and stopped the issue of a convertible loan.

Colt turnover doubles

COLT, formerly City of London Telecommunications, saw its turnover double in the first quarter as the company continued to recruit new business customers in London and Frankfurt. Colt made a pre-tax loss of £6.6 million, against a loss of £2.7 million in the same quarter a year ago, on turnover that rose 206 per cent to £15 million. The deeper loss was expected and was the result of increased expansion costs. Colt plans to offer services in Paris, Munich, Hamburg and Berlin later this year. The shares closed unchanged at 280p.

Quality Care in talks

SHARES of Quality Care Homes, the nursing group, are expected to rise sharply today after Principal Healthcare confirmed it is in talks with a view to making a recommended offer for its rival. A cash offer would add to the fortune of Donald Barnatyne, its founder and chairman, who holds a 50.2 per cent stake. The company, currently valued at £43 million, has an average occupancy of 90 per cent, and this year is expected to lift pre-tax profits by 10 per cent, to £6.2 million. Its shares held at 307½p yesterday.

Ericsson Sussex move

ERICSSON, the mobile phone company which has become Sweden's fastest growing business, is moving the centre of one of its main divisions from Stockholm to Hørsholm, West Sussex. Its Business Unit Transport & Cable Networks arm, which employs 2,300, will move this summer as part of an attempt to reverse its current underperformance. About 70 staff will be transferred. It said it was attracted by the deregulation in the UK market.

S&P buys fund analysts

STANDARD & POOR'S, the rating agency, has bought Fund Research, the investment fund analysis group, for an undisclosed sum. The founders, Peter Jeffries and Richard Timberlake, will move with the company, which will be called Standard & Poor's Fund Research. Standard & Poor's rates 500 money market and bond funds worldwide. Fund Research analyses funds in ten regions and sectors, such as America, Europe, UK Equity Income, UK Equity Growth and Japan.

T&N sells subsidiary

T&N, the automotive components and engineering group, has sold the Ferodo Caernarfon clutch facing and industrial friction products business to US investors for £5 million cash. Proceeds from the sale will be put into the fund that has been set up in respect of future asbestos-related claims, said T&N. In 1996, Ferodo Caernarfon recorded a pre-tax loss after attributable financing costs of £200,000 on third-party sales of £9.6 million. Its net assets are worth about £8 million.

Birmingham City profit

THE sale of Gary Breen, the Republic of Ireland international defender, to Coventry City, the Premiership football club, for £1.4 million, helped Birmingham City to a £2.7 million profit in the six months to February 28, the first figures the First Division club has released since it joined the AIM. This compares with a £1.87 million loss last time for the last financial year. There is no interim dividend. The club expects to use the £7.5 million proceeds of its flotation to buy new players.

Cantab in the black

CANTAB PHARMACEUTICALS, the biotech company that develops products for the treatment of infectious diseases and cancer, earned pre-tax profits of £3.38 million in the three months to March 31 (£1.8 million loss). Revenues of £5.38 million (£17,000) included a £5 million licence fee from Glaxo Wellcome. The company is working to develop Cantab's DisCHSV technology for genital herpes. Earnings were 0.21p a share (0.17p loss). The shares were unchanged at 982½p.

Raymond adviser to pay £1m settlement

By PAUL DURMAN

THE senior West End lawyer who is one of the closest advisers to Paul Raymond, the property and sex industry tycoon, has agreed to pay more than £1 million to settle a legal action in which he was accused of abusing a client's pension fund.

Mark Duval, a senior partner at the St James's firm of Amburst Brown Colombotti, will have to find about

£475,000 for Henry Rowe, his former client and friend. He will also have to pay a share of the legal costs, which could reach £2 million, according to one prospective witness.

Mr Duval is a director of the Paul Raymond Organisation and a trustee of the trusts that control the £350 million empire, whose interests range from soft pornography to central London property. Along with Carl Sincher, Mr Duval is one of the closest

advisers to the 71-year-old Mr Raymond.

The settlement means that all allegations of impropriety made against Mr Duval have been withdrawn.

Although the professional indemnity insurers to Amburst Brown Colombotti are expected to bear part of the cost of settlement, Mr Duval will also have to find a substantial sum.

The dispute centred on a block of

flats in Bournemouth. Mr Duval, through one of his numerous companies, acquired a half-share in this property in September 1988. Planning permission was refused a few months later, and the stake in the property was sold again to Mr Rowe's pension fund, whose trustees included Mr Duval.

This move, made just at the start of the recession, lost several hundred thousand pounds for Mr Rowe's pension fund. City Diary, page 29

BUDGETE

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UK BANKS AND BUILDING SOCIETIES

Jobs for all in Threadneedle Street □ Sainsbury counts the cost □ Capital idea for Virgin

Opportunity knocks for Old Lady

□ NO ONE was more delighted than Eddie George, it seems, to discover on Monday morning that the Bank of England's carefully prepared contingency plans for a Labour Government were not what was needed. The post-election version of Labour policy allows the Bank's new monetary committee to dispose of interest rate initiatives and not just propose them.

Financial markets were almost as delighted as the Governor. The fear of greater short-term pain, now that political uncertainty has been withdrawn, was judged to be less than the potential pleasure of a cut in long-term interest rates.

Once the understandable euphoria subsides, the problems of change will come more into focus. Industry and its stakeholders will realise that Gordon Brown's daring, if pragmatic, reform will have much in common with monetary union.

To the extent that any official hand influences the foreign exchange, the Bank's monetary committee will control the level of sterling as well as determining interest rates. That may prove uncomfortable if early decisions err on the side of caution to make sure the Bank meets its inflation targets. Sure, the Bank will have

some responsibility for exchange rates and employment. But it will be like the blurred background of a holiday snap.

Personalities will determine how cautious policy becomes, and few of them are known. There is Steady Eddie himself, the Montgolfier of interest rates. But he will have a new deputy looking over his monetary shoulder who is more likely to be Gavin Davies than Howard.

Behind them and Mervyn King, the once free-thinking economist who has taken on deep Bank colouring, will lie a new syndicalist Court of all the interests, judging the executives' performance from their own perspectives. Mr Brown should be able to choose a near-majority of these within ten months.

Alongside the Bank's executive will be the new breed of monetary commissioners. They will each have a vote that counts, which makes the job more important than it was under Labour's pre-election plan. Beyond that, the likely candidates and their day-to-day role are, to be generous, sketchy.

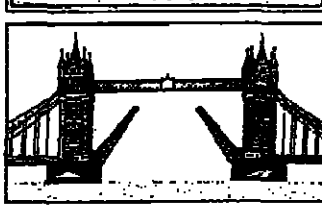
In America and Germany, such folk come from regional state banks. In the UK version, it is not yet certain whether they will have offices, secretaries or computer terminals, let alone whether they will be paid enough to attract anyone but academics, the only breed likely to be able to continue an outside job.

Most of all, Bank and Treasury will be terrified of the committee leaking, as committees tend to do. The Millennium nightmare will be a repeat of the 1960s Bank Rate tribunal.

No reward at the checkout

□ WHAT is the price of loyalty? At J Sainsbury, the answer has recently been disconcertingly high. Today, as the company reports dismal, but sensibly fore-shadowed, profits, its main task will be to convince the City that it

PENNINGTON



is no longer being forced to pay painfully to win back the business that was spirited away by slicker competitors.

Hoover simply demonstrated the folly of buying short-term sales growth with largesse. Far from building loyalty to the brand, that free-flights fiasco caused unquantifiable damage to the company image.

Sainsbury's scheme of encouraging customers to splurge by offering bountiful bonus points to be credited to its Reward loyalty card is not in the same league of ludicrous generosity, but nonetheless has been costing the company more

in margin loss than it has been winning in profits. Increasingly, sophisticated customers know a bargain when they see one and they have, apparently, been happy to take advantage of those on offer at Sainsbury's.

Will they continue spending when the special offers become less special? Although David Sainsbury is expected to make much today of his sales growth figures, they will not provide the answer to that crucial question.

Unfortunately, what they will show is that arch rival Tesco is continuing to grow its like-for-like sales at a considerably faster rate, in spite of the Sainsbury promotions.

Sainsbury is not a basket case by any means, but it has stumbled badly, as profits down well over £100 million to about £650 million demonstrate. Those who have lost most from its fall have been the Sainsbury family, who have seen their fortune severely diminished by the stock's performance. The City should be wary of helping to rebuild that fortune

without strong evidence that the group has found a way to retain customer loyalty without paying a pointless premium.

Branson calling

□ EVEN if he professes disdain for its output, Richard Eyre's decision to buy Virgin Radio has more obvious commercial logic than his recent move into catering. Accumulating a tighter hold on London's advertising airwaves will improve Capital's sales effectiveness: Virgin had been a noisy, if not particularly successful competitor.

The two London stations will retain their separate identities, we are told, but we can expect them to co-operate rather than compete. When such strategies are mooted in the airline industry, Mr Branson has been known to get a little hot under the open-necked shirt, but flexibility is a sensible characteristic for a successful

entrepreneur. For Capital, the deal represents a reasonably priced way into winning the national licence it has been keen to acquire. With Radio One's listening figures plummeting in the absence of the raucous Chris Evans, there is room for a serious contender to win the hearts, and spending power, of youthful listeners.

The deal also brings Capital, and Richard Eyre, the unquantifiable benefit of Mr Branson as a major shareholder and a non-executive director.

Quite how he will perform will be fascinating to see. The bearded balloonist has not previously given indications of being fully in sympathy with current boardroom etiquette.

Bank notes

□ NO doubt emissaries of the solicitors Norton Rose are by now engrossed in their inquiries into how Hambros Bank conducted itself in the infamous Lancia affair. But there is some scepticism as to how far up the hierarchy of the bank inquiries might need to progress. City solicitors and merchant banks are not unknown to each other, and Norton Rose and Hambros are far from being strangers.

Ryanair on course to float

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

RYANAIR, the Irish airline, is planning to seek a listing for its shares on the Irish stock exchange and a Nasdaq quotation in New York through an offering of 54.2 million shares, the company said.

The offer price is expected to be between 176p and 179p a share, valuing the company at between 1.62 billion and 1.73 billion.

Currently, 62 per cent of Ryanair is owned by the family of Tony Ryan, its founder, 20 per cent by David Bonderman, the chairman, and the remaining 18 per cent by other top management. A mid-range price for the shares of 178p would value the Ryan family stake at about 1.17 billion.

The flotation will consist of an offer of shares to investors in Ireland, a public offer in America, and offers to professional investors in Britain and continental Europe. A pathfinder prospectus will be published shortly. Dealing in the shares is expected to begin by the end of May.

BP rises to £755m and adds to share of UK gas market

BY CARL MORTIMER

BRITISH PETROLEUM has sharply increased its share of the UK gas market, helping the oil company to raise its upstream performance, and lift profits in the first quarter from 553 million to 755 million.

BP's worldwide oil and gas production was its highest for six years in the first quarter. Gas volumes were up 6 per cent, partly because of strong sales in the UK. Worldwide oil sales rose 3 per cent.

BP's gas sales in the UK have benefited from settlement, earlier this year, of the take-or-pay contract dispute with the former British Gas. The deal has enabled BP to sell gas unwanted but previously contracted to Centrica, the new gas marketing company, in the market. Rodney Chase, BP's exploration director, said that the company's UK market share has grown to 16 per cent from 12 per cent two years ago.

John Browne, chief executive, said BP's first-quarter pre-exceptional profits were a record, up 27 per cent in dollar terms



Browne: self-help

and 19 per cent in sterling. He said: "Half of the gain is self-help and half of it is down to the exceptional environment."

In 1995, BP set itself a target of \$1.5 billion of self-help profit improvement over five years and achieved \$600 million in the first year. Mr Browne said that BP had achieved \$120 million in self-help in the first quarter out of a target of \$300 million for the year. He indicated that about \$100 million came from better volumes and

margins and the remainder from lower costs.

The bulk of the profits gain came from exploration and production, with a rise in replacement cost operating profit to 693 million (£737 million). BP has had little success in new wells in the Atlantic Frontier after initial finds West of Shetlands.

BP said the overall operating environment was more favourable because of the higher oil price. Average realisations were \$21.30 compared with \$18.50 per barrel a year ago. Refining and marketing profits were £179 million (£156 million) on better volumes and unchanged margins. BP said the benefits of the joint venture with Mobil in Europe would not show up in figures until the end of the year.

Net debt was \$6.1 billion at the end of March. Gearing stood at 28 per cent. BP is paying a quarterly dividend of 5.25p a share, the same as last quarter, but up 24 per cent on the previous year.

Tempos, page 28

Court stops Brazilian mine sell-off

THE \$5 billion privatisation of CVRD, the Brazilian state mining group, was halted midway through the bidding yesterday when a court official charged on to Rio de Janeiro's stock exchange floor with an injunction.

Officials of Brazil's National Development Bank said they expected to quash the court order soon and resume the auction.

The halt, which occurred just as the bidding reached a 13.2 per cent premium over the 26.67 reais (about \$25) per share base price, extended a week-long battle between government lawyers and courts.

Wace says £14m revamp has failed to halt decline

BY FRASER NELSON

SHARES in Wace fell a further 45 per cent yesterday as the paper, packaging and printing combine admitted that the £14 million spent on restructuring itself last year has failed to halt the decline in its profits.

The company, which only two months ago issued an upbeat assessment of its prospects, shocked the City by giving warning that its US pre-printing operations were still losing money, with no sign of improvement. Analysts are now expecting the company to lose £10 million in the full year, against previous forecasts of £9 million profit. Stephen Puckett, finance di-

rector, said: "We knew the US operations made a loss in January and February, but in March individual businesses told us things were getting better, and this went in the statement. But they have very short order books — hours rather than days — and high fixed costs."

The warning was the company's third in 12 months. Mr Puckett said that more bad news is unlikely, but admitted that the company was in no better position to forecast now than it was six months ago.

Peter Brown, chairman of Riverside Press and Dawson Holdings, the printing com-

panies, will this month replace Frans ten Bos, the former Scottish international rugby player, as chairman of Wace.

Analysts suggested that his appointment may put pressure on Trevor Grice, chief executive, who launched the company into a £50 million expenditure programme that continued throughout the downturn. Wace's debt is now heading towards £65 million, and is expected to cost £5 million in interest this year.

Wace shares, which have fallen from 250p in 12 months, slid 33½p to 41p yesterday.

Tempos, page 28

Barclays Bank PLC.

Interest Rates for Business Customers, Charities and Societies with effect from 6th May 1997.

ACCOUNT TITLE	GROSS RATE (%P.A.)	NET RATE (%P.A.)
BUSINESS PREMIUM ACCOUNT. (Rates also apply to Partners Premium Account) - instant access.		
£250,000 +	3.500	2.800
£100,000 - £249,999	3.375	2.700
£25,000 - £99,999	3.125	2.500
£2,000 - £24,999	2.625	2.100
£100 - £1,999	2.250	1.800
HIGH INTEREST BUSINESS ACCOUNT - 14 days' notice.		
£250,000 +	4.875	3.900
£100,000 - £249,999	4.750	3.800
£25,000 - £99,999	4.500	3.600
£10,000 - £24,999	4.000	3.200
£2,000 - £9,999	3.250	2.600
CLIENT'S PREMIUM ACCOUNT		
£1 million +	4.250	3.400
£250,000 - £999,999	4.125	3.300
£100,000 - £249,999	4.000	3.200
£25,000 - £99,999	3.625	2.900
£10,000 - £24,999	3.375	2.700
BARCLAYS COMMUNITY ACCOUNT. (An interest bearing current account for clubs, charities, churches and societies.) No minimum balance.		
£25,000 +	2.125	1.700
£10,000 - £24,999	1.625	1.300
£5,000 - £9,999	1.125	0.900
£0 - £4,999	0.875	0.700
SEVEN DAY DEPOSIT ACCOUNT. (A seven days' notice account.) No minimum balance.		
	0.500	0.400

GROSS RATE is the contractual rate of interest payable not taking account of the deduction of income tax at the lower rate. NET RATE is the rate which would be payable after allowing for the deduction of income tax at the lower rate. The Tax Deduction Scheme for Interest (TDS) may vary and, therefore, the net rate is given as an illustration only. This will only be deducted in those cases where the Bank is obliged to do so.

Interest rates quoted are subject to variation. For further information on these or any other services please contact your local Barclays branch or Business Centre who will be pleased to help.



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Bre-X stock collapses as trading resumes

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

SHARES in Bre-X, the disgraced company at the centre of the world's biggest mining fraud, fell sharply after trading resumed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The shares, which had once been worth more than C\$280, slumped from C\$3.17 to 6.50 cents, after the announcement by Strathcona Mineral Services, a mining consultancy, that there was no significant amount of gold at the Bussang site in Indonesia. Bre-X had claimed the site was the largest gold deposit in the world.

Yesterday was the first chance that investors had to react to the Strathcona report. More than 35.4 million Bre-X shares, about half the exchange's normal overall daily trading volume, changed hands in the first hour, overloading the computer system and forcing another halt in Bre-X trading.

Officials at Nasdaq, the American stock market that also quoted Bre-X shares, have summoned directors of Bre-X to appear at a hearing before the exchange's listing qualifications panel. Trading in Bre-X shares on Nasdaq will remain suspended until a decision has been reached on the legitimacy of the company's claims.

Both Freeport-McMoRan, Bre-X's US partner at Bussang, and the Indonesian Government, which had a stake in the mine, are pulling out of the project. Nasumba Group, the Indonesian company involved, is closely linked to President Suharto of Indonesia, who is in the middle of an election campaign.

The debacle is also being investigated by the Ontario Securities Exchange and by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's commercial crime unit.



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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Gilts and shares cheer independence for Bank

INDEPENDENCE DAY for the Bank of England was celebrated in style with the subsequent quarter-point rise in interest rates to 6.25 per cent taking second place.

Government securities led the celebrations with gains of more than 54 at the longer end of the market in the busiest day's trading since Black Wednesday. Share prices also responded positively, breaching 4,500 for the first time, to close at yet another all-time high.

The FT-SE 100 index ended just below its best, but still 63.7 points up at 4,519.3.

Prices were first of all marked sharply higher during the pre-market warm-up to reflect Wall Street's 143-point leap overnight. But everything was put on hold after it was announced that the monetary meeting between Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, the Governor, had been brought forward 24 hours. An early lead of 40 points was halved, but the market quickly rebounded.

The subsequent rise in rates had already been factored in to the market. However, the move to offer the Bank independence, enabling it to adjust rates as it sees fit came out of the blue and was warmly received.

Richard Jeffrey, head of economic research at Charterhouse, said: "Everything has been led up by the gilt market which is clearly impressed with this change in the setting of monetary policy and partial independence for the Bank of England."

First-quarter figures from BP exceeded most expectations and the shares responded with a rise of 29p at 732p.

Utilities bounced back after Friday's falls, generated by renewed windfall tax fears. National Power rose 9p to 521p and United Utilities put up 19p to 668p, while BT put up 3p to 400p. Railtrack shed 12p to 424p, worried by John Prescott's decision to take transport under his wing.

BSkyB, 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, rose 28p to 595p. The group is expected to announce its digital television tie-up with BT today.

It was a bad day for shareholders of Wace Group as the price plunged 33p to 41p, marking £26.5 million from the market price of £38.9 million. It follows the printer's third profits warning of the past year with little sign of a pick-



Whitbread led the way in the brewing sector with 21p rise

up. Trading in the US remained poor and the group is expected to report an operating loss for the year.

Superscape VR continued to reel from last month's news of increased losses in the first half, with the price tumbling 22p to 212p. During the past two weeks the price has fallen from the 300p level.

Chesterfield Properties

The City last night had ample opportunity to tax Reed Elsevier on the proposed \$300 million deal with Microsoft undertaken by its jointly owned company Reed Elsevier. Reed talked to a group of fund managers over dinner at the Savoy Hotel. It was hosted by Henderson Crosthwaite, the broker.

dropped 0.1p to 608p after Robert Masted, chief executive, slashed the value of some of the group's investments resulting in a drop in the net asset value from 508p to 528p.

The profit takers moved in and wiped 7p off Arion Properties at 22p. Only last week the group announced it was pondering the possibility of arranging a reverse takeover. Vega, the computer and

software group, rallied 23p to 292p as the chairman, managing director and finance director all took advantage of last week's fall in the price following a trading update to top up their holdings.

Salehurst started life on the big board with a useful premium after a placing by Rowan Darrington, the broker, at 117p. Shares in the paper

Lynch, the broker, has been urging clients to buy ahead of the results. Lehman Brothers is also pushing the shares.

Bass was another firm spot, adding 9p to 826p after some positive comments from ABN Amro Hoare Govett. Analyst Eric Frankel says Bass has underperformed the other two main brewers recently and should be bought.

The group is still waiting to find out from the Monopolies Commission if it will be allowed to proceed with its bid for Carlsberg Teltel. Mr Frankel thinks the deal should be allowed. "Bass would not allow itself to pay too much for Carlsberg Teltel. It should not have to sacrifice earnings growth to satisfy any conditions laid down by the Government. The MMC should let them have it. Bass is the only buyer for the business."

Frazer Ramzan, drinks analysts at Lehman Brothers, says there are a number of questions that need to be answered about the brewers, but he was optimistic about the outlook in spite of yesterday's rise.

Scottish & Newcastle ended the day on a firm note with a rise of 18p to 693p, while there were also gains for Joseph Holt, 12p to £28.50, Grosvenor Inns, 6p to 211p, and Greenalls, 6p to 507p.

Elsewhere in the sector, fast growing PizzaExpress retreated 12p to 652p as Janus Capital Corporation, its biggest shareholder, sold some more shares in the market reducing its holding from 16.9 per cent to 15.7 per cent, or 10.34 million shares.

GLUEDGED: It was the business day for bond traders since Black Wednesday. The move to offer the Bank of England partial independence sent prices soaring at the longer end by more than 54. As one broker commented: "The move will protect the market from inflation."

In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt leapt £20.25 to £113.32 as a massive 230,000 contracts were completed, the second highest traded in one day. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 raced ahead £3.12 to £108.7, while among shorter dated issues Treasury 8 per cent 2000 put on £7.10 to £103.32.

NEW YORK: The Dow Jones industrial average, bucking profit-taking and a weak bond market, extended gains at midday to reach 7,240.58 points, up 26.09.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	7240.58 (+26.09)
S&P Composite	630.04 (+0.23)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	20180.92 (+66.17)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	12579.34 (+180.03)
Amsterdam:	
Euro Stoxx	791.76 (+6.19)
Sydney:	
ASX	2512.8 (+20.1)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	3568.26 (+39.53)
Singapore:	
SEAC	2055.66 (+37.04)
Brussels:	
General	12615.79 (+15.64)
Paris:	
CAC-40	2651.93 (+20.91)
Zurich:	
SEA Gen	1022.70 (+3.70)
London:	
FT 30	2322.6 (+25.9)
FTSE 100	4519.3 (+63.7)
FTSE 250	4520.2 (+22.1)
FTSE 350	2303.3 (+27.0)
FTSE Smallcap 100	2289.3 (+42.0)
FTSE All-Share	2197.26 (+20.0)
FTSE Non Financials	2197.16 (+23.7)
FTSE Fixed Interest	118.83 (+1.52)
FTSE Com. Secs	66.80 (+1.5)
Bargains	5499
SEAQ Volume	761.8M
US\$	1.6368 (+0.0188)
German Mark	2.4829 (+0.0338)
Exchange Index	100.6 (+0.9)
Bank of England official clove (4pm)	1.4424
ESDSE	n/a
RPI	155.4 Mar (2.5%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	154.9 Mar (2.7%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Alliance & Leicester	579	+ 5
Aurora Inv Trust	100	...
Cable & Wireless	579	...
Charterhouse	100	...
Close Bros Prot VCT	95	...
Comino	149	+ 10
Donatantonio	80	...
Dragons Hilt Clubs	129	- 2
Heal's	212	...
ITG Group	164	...
Lady in Leisure	171	...
Leisure Link Ltd	115	...
Mtn Currie I&G Cap	91	...
Mtn Currie I&G Inc	98	...
NMT (SO)	49	...
Newcastle Ltd	123	+ 3
Northstar Secs	29	...
Oxford Tech Venture	95	...
Partners Hidge	171	+ 4
Pennine AUM (100)	100	...
Petra Diamonds	53	- 4
Petra Diamonds Ws	30	...
Qualicam (143)	155	...
Salehurst	124	...
Soccer Investments	103	...
Torch Hldgs	107	...
United Overseas Grp	68	- 3

RIGHTS ISSUES

Ask Carrol n/p (160)	35
Barlows n/p (525)	2
Break for the Brdr (51)	1
Pemberton n/p (18)	2
Rackwood n/p (18)	2

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:	
Danka Bt Sys	532p (+38p)
Eurotherm	413p (+27p)
Admiral	417p (+20p)
Grampian	272p (+13p)
Stanley Leisure	280p (+11p)
Tesco	270p (+10p)
Sotheby's	990p (+25p)
FALLS:	
French Conn	300p (-15p)
Prohibition	565p (-12p)
More Gas	621p (-12p)
PizzaExpress	652p (-12p)
Cortec	258p (-14p)
Quarto	214p (-11p)

Closing Prices Page 30

TEMPUS

Labour traps the bears

THE world has turned upside down. A Labour Government is elected and the new Chancellor's first move is to hand over control of macroeconomic policy to the Bank of England. Gilts soar, dealing room screens turn blue and the FT-SE 100 surges upwards.

Cynics may wonder whether the Government's new independence is guaranteed to survive right up to the next election but the decision to hand over monetary policy to the Bank has removed a huge amount of political risk, leaving investors with the prospect of lower long-term interest rates. The stability generated by such a policy for industry as well as the financial markets will lead to expectations of an even lower inflation target than the current 2.5 per cent and that should improve the value of all financial assets.

It is not all good news, investors in cyclical

shares will have winced at the quarter-point hike, predictable though it was. The prospect of tighter monetary policy means that sterling will remain a hard currency, tough news for exporters. In this topsy-turvy world, the expected winners under a Labour Government may be even more so, the winners of the last Tory Government. Highly rated growth stocks, blue chip international companies, should do well whereas the high-yielding inflation hedges will suffer and fund managers who have consistently backed these plays will again suffer.

Having unshackled the Bank, the Chancellor has left himself little room to play with tax. Gordon cannot create an inflationary boom, if Eddie can choke it off, so fiscal policy will follow a similar course. Those who sold ahead of Labour will be cursing.

Reed/Elsevier

AT LAST, Reed Elsevier is paying more attention to the management of its own business than the acquisition of others. The strategic shift came to light in December, when the Anglo-Dutch publisher issued a trading statement that came close to a profits warning. Since then, talk of a mammoth acquisition has all but disappeared.

Reed's worst problem has been its inability to offset the decline in hard-copy publishing, which accounts for four-fifths of its business, with growth in electronic publishing. But Microsoft has come to the rescue. For a price, Reed will use Microsoft's commercial Internet portfolio, such as the Microsoft Internet Explorer, to make Reed's scientific, professional, business journals and databases readily available

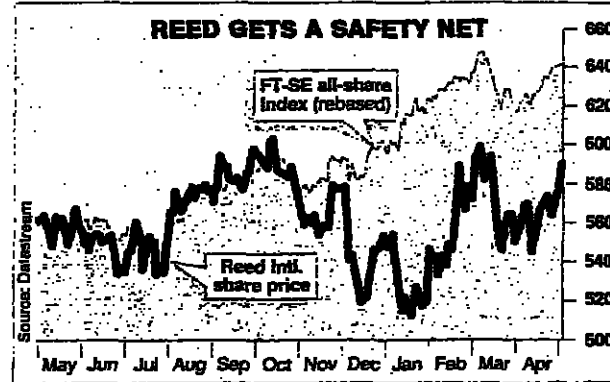
on computer platforms.

Reed is right to assume that its best prospects lie in the business-to-business electronic publishing and on-line market.

Lexis-Nexis, the big on-line service that it purchased three years ago, continues to drive Reed's performance and any improvements in electronic delivery elsewhere

can only improve the group's fortunes.

If Reed's efforts succeed in reversing the relative decline of hard-copy sales, shareholders will be more willing to support an acquisition of the Lexis-Nexis scale. With Microsoft, management has taken a step in the right direction and investors should back them.



BP

BP is generating so much cash that it will find itself in a delicate position by the end of this year. Gearing is down to 28 per cent and a company capable of achieving strong double-digit earnings growth should maintain some debt in its balance sheet. But the oil company could easily produce £1.4 billion in net cash flow after capital expenditure and dividends in the current year.

That gives BP the scope for a huge investment or a payback to investors and the latter seems more likely. Assets in the oil industry look expensive at present and the current BP board has not the extravagant mindset of its predecessors; the guiding principle is to make more with less. So investors should probably expect a payout. Last year, the cash dividend cost some £700 million; BP could easily double that and leave money in the kitty.

At least part of BP's success

this year has been in a big boost to UK gas volumes.

This has been a curious product of the take-over deal with British Gas in which BP was paid compensation for losing the high-price contracts and took back unwanted gas. In the end, BP has been able to sell the surplus gas profitably and pocket BG's cash. Oh dear.

Wace

TREVOR GRICE, chief executive of Wace, is proving adept at both creating and destroying value with little skill in preserving it. He rescued the printing services company from debts of £100 million, but wrecked the recovery and is now turning the cash pile into debt. A glance at his chosen method of cost cutting means the profit warnings will still shock the market, but should no longer surprise.

By doing away with expensive printing executives, Wace has learnt belatedly.

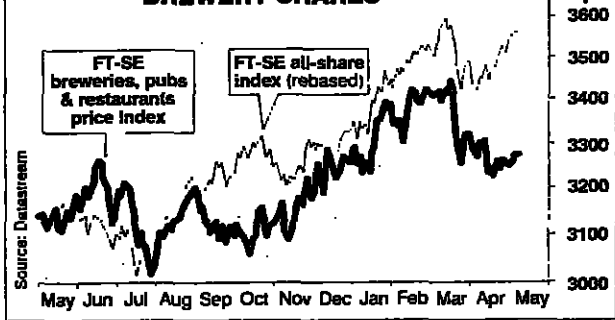
the business depends on contacts: the departing managers have taken a herd of clients with them.

Reports of its New York office losing 60 per cent of profits after sacking a key executive are not encouraging. No fear, says Wace, we will dispose of some prepress assets and raise some money. But customers can buy their own pre-press kit cheaply and Wace is unlikely to raise much cash.

Worse still, new acquisitions are bringing problems. Meanwhile, Wace is persisting with £30 million of capital expenditure this year, aimed at improving profits in its UK pre-printing business while profits are disappearing in other divisions. The situation is now dire. The new chairman may raise a hope, but Wace has promised jam tomorrow too often before. Selling shareholders will be hard-pushed to find buyers their only hope is a takeover bid or a very slow recovery.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

SLAKING A THIRST FOR BREWERY SHARES



COMMODITIES			
LIFEC			
COCAINE			
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jun	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jul	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oct	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nov	100.00	100.00	100.00
Dec	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jan	100.00	100.00	100.00
Feb	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mar	100.00	100.00	100.00
Apr	100.00	100.00	100.00
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
ROBUST COFFEE (S)			
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jun	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jul	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oct	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nov	100.00	100.00	100.00
Dec	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jan	100.00	100.00	100.00
Feb	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mar	100.00	100.00	100.00
Apr	100.00	100.00	100.00
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
WHITE SUGAR (H)			
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jun	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jul	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oct	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nov	100.00	100.00	100.00
Dec	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jan	100.00	100.00	100.00
Feb	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mar	100.00	100.00	100.00
Apr	100.00	100.00	100.00
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION			
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jun	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jul	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oct	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nov	100.00	100.00	100.00
Dec	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jan	100.00	100.00	100.00
Feb	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mar	100.00	100.00	100.00
Apr	100.00	100.00	100.00
May	100.00	100.00	100.00

LIFE OPTIONS

LIFE			
LIFE			
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jun	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jul	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oct	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nov	100.00	100.00	100.00
Dec	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jan	100.00	100.00	100.00
Feb	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mar	100.00	100.00	100.00
Apr	100.00	100.00	100.00
May	100.00	100.00	100.00

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES			
LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES			
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jun	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jul	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oct	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nov	100.00	100.00	100.00
Dec	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jan	100.00	100.00	100.00
Feb	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mar	100.00	100.00	100.00
Apr	100.00	100.00	100.00
May	100.00	100.00	100.00

MONEY RATES (%)

MONEY RATES (%)			
MONEY RATES (%)			
May	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jun	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jul	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oct	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nov	100.00	100.00	100.00
Dec	100.00	100.00	100.00
Jan	100.00	100.00	100.00
Feb	100.00	100.00	100.00
Mar	100.00	100.00	100.00
Apr	100.00	100.00	100.00
May	100.00	100.00	100.00

Richard Eyre, managing director of Capital Radio, is no fan of Richard Branson's Virgin Radio. "Virgin is rubbish," he said. He doesn't think the format works—the station plays a jarring mixture of hard-driving rock classics that appeal to young men and old, and easy-listening chart-toppers that would make your mother break into song.

So why is Capital buying Virgin Radio? The acquisition will consolidate Capital's position as the largest commercial radio operator in the country and, more importantly, eliminate a competitor in the London market. Furthermore, Virgin Radio, through Virgin AM, will give Capital its first national licence.

Owning a national licence will speed up Capital's entry into digital audio broadcasting, the next great frontier. Only national radio stations have guaranteed slots on the "multiplexes"—the blocks of frequencies assigned to digital broadcasters—that will be fired up next year. Digital broadcasting will give unprecedented reception clarity, providing the listeners buy new, and expensive, digital

Virgin deal hastens Capital entry into digital sound era

radios. "Virgin gives us the critical mass to attack the digital market," Eyre said.

Capital is buying marginally profitable Virgin Radio in exchange for £64.7 million in new Capital shares. The Virgin Group, as a result, will own 14 per cent of Capital and Branson will become a non-executive director with an "active interest" in Capital's future, a spokesman said. The deal was sealed on Saturday. Capital moved quickly. Radio groups are hot properties; if Capital walked, Branson would have had no trouble finding a new saviour.

The Virgin acquisition brings Capital pretty close to the overall market share limit imposed by the Radio Authority. In London, where its share of the total audience will go from

about 23 per cent to about 27 per cent, it will have no room to expand because no radio group is allowed to own more than three licences in any given market. Capital's London portfolio will consist of Capital FM, Capital Gold and Virgin FM. There are another three stations in Birmingham and six in Kent, Hampshire and Sussex.

Shares in Capital dipped after the Virgin Radio deal was announced, but the City was generally pleased by the expansion proposal. At least Capital was sticking to the same industry—its last acquisition turned into a public relations disaster. In November it entered the food chain through the £37 million purchase of My Kinds Town, the restaurant company whose outlets include Hen-

ry J Bean's, the Chicago Pizza Pie Factory and Beach Blanket Babylon.

Capital justified the move by arguing that theme restaurants fit its overall strategy of evolving into a music and entertainment group. Investors were less enthusiastic, noting that such restaurants require periodic makeovers to keep them in fashion and that the cross-promotion potential is not obvious. Analysts, noting that a bid premium had crept into Capital's shares, attributed defensive motives to the acquisition. Given the reaction, Eyre could not risk another diversification move.

Capital has grown remarkably well in an industry that was not taken seriously until a few years ago. Capital Radio was launched on October 16, 1973. Growth was slow in

the first years when commercial radio was known as the "2 per cent industry"—no one expected it to capture more than 2 per cent of national advertising revenues.

Growth did not accelerate until the Radio Authority was formed in 1991 with the brief to expand the sector. Classic FM won the first national radio licence in 1992. The 1996 Broadcasting Act gave the industry another boost by lifting the market share limits. There are now some 170 commercial stations and they captured 4.7 per cent of the display advertising market in 1996, up from 2.8 per cent in 1992. Growth is slowing, but Eyre thinks a 6 per cent advertising share can be attained. He thinks Virgin FM can grow as well but only if its format is overhauled.

Under Capital, Virgin FM will become a pure rock station, similar, he said, to the thumping KROQ station in New York. The expanding market for ageing male yuppies who think music died with Jimi Hendrix appears to be the target.

ERIC REGULY



ANTHONY HARRIS

Brown opts for the Major road

It is about 30 years since Harold Wilson invited the cream of the financial establishment round to No 10 to toast the FT index, when it passed 400 for the first time. After a struggle, Labour had proved that it was acceptable in the City. It had not, alas, proved that its economic policies were sound.

No struggle this time, but Gordon Brown should not be too quick to celebrate the market's approval of his first act as Chancellor: nor, for that matter, should the City be too quick to approve.

The *modus operandi*, with a broad monetary policy committee, and published minutes, looks good: it is, after all, closely modelled on that of the Fed, the world's most successful central bank.

But the sealed orders are quite different. What is it as a Tory minister once asked his civil servants, that we are trying to optimise? The Bank of England has been told to set rates to achieve an inflation target set by the Government.

Is that all? Not quite. There is also a phrase about "supporting the general economic policies of the Government". But the order of priority looks clear, all the same: at heart, this is the Bundesbank model, where the main duty of the central bank is to guard the value of the currency.

The Fed, by contrast, operates under the Humphrey-Hawkins Act, which lays equal emphasis on inflation, economic growth and employment. The difference matters.

The Fed's broad brief so offended the monetary purists in Chicago that they set up their own Shadow Open Market Committee (SOMC) to say what policy ought to be. Their advice has never changed: interest rates should be raised. The Fed followed its own star. Result: Alan Greenspan has become a lay saint, while it is long since anyone took the faintest notice of the SOMC.

Now Eddie George and his officials are not doctrinaire monetarists, and the Bank's forecasts for the real economy have often been praised as better than those of the Treasury. Why, then, And so smug.

have they been sounding like a less extreme version of the SOMC? Because, by their own account, they were asked the wrong question. Not, what is the right level for rates? But, what level of rates will deliver the inflation target? Since an inflation target is not really a target at all, but a ceiling, this was bound to give them a deflationary bias.

Will their "independent" operations show the same bias? Let us suppose, charitably, that the Bank has learnt perfect judgment from experience, and that its policies are in some sense optimal; its brief still looks lopsided.

Aha, you may say, but this is Britain, not America. The Fed has to run the economy, because the American budget only emerges after months of horse-trading, and is always quite different from what the Administration proposed in the first place. So it is just about taxes and spending. A British Chancellor, by contrast, has Draconian powers, and so he can manage the economy. But can he? He can set a course (within the limits of the Treaty, and of his own election pledges).

But when events—in the currency markets, say, or the oil market, or in the European economy—make that course look dangerous, it is hard to change it. So unless Brown intends a series of mini-Budgets (very old Labour, that would be) he may have to look to the Bank to respond, after all, and deliver an optimal policy, not just an inflation target. That was the tunnel vision that let Jc in Major blunder into a recession, which can hardly be the lead Gordon Brown means to follow.

The first Labour government since 1979 has to establish its anti-inflationary credentials, to be sure, and it would also be nice to close the unflattering gap between gilt yields and those on French and German bonds (the hope that helped to ignite the markets). It would even help the Budget balance, Italian fashion. So this could still prove a good start. If only Brown didn't sound so smug. And so smug.

Brown's revolution rocks Bank to the foundation

Robert Miller looks at the implications of the new Chancellor's reforms

Gordon Brown, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, has given City traders and the money markets a dose of what they like best: the smack of firm government.

Within days of taking up the reins at the Treasury Mr Brown has signalled the most fundamental shake-up of the Bank of England since its foundation nearly 303 years ago.

The City had always assumed, and indeed it was outlined in the Labour Party manifesto, that the new Government would oversee reforms at the Bank.

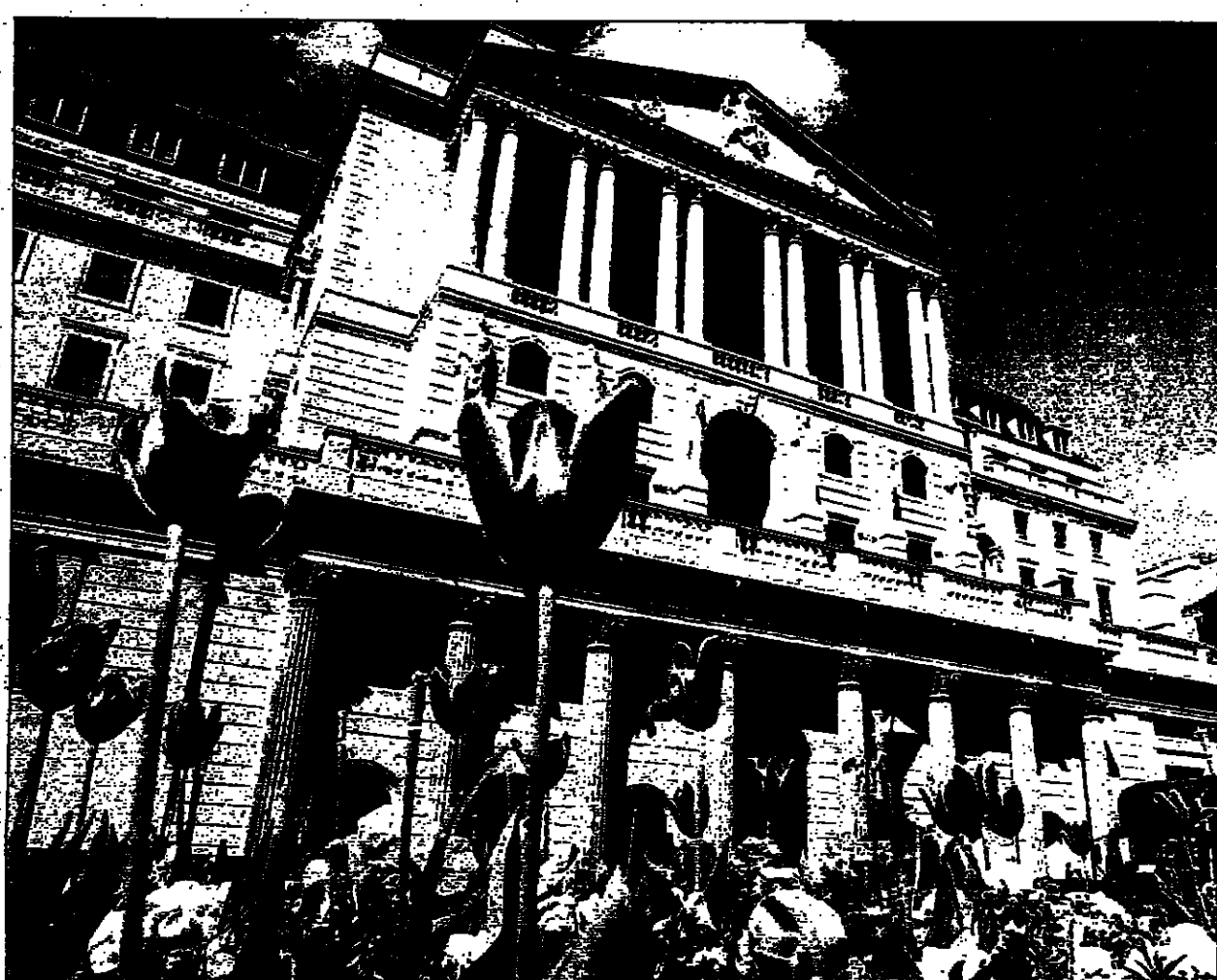
For the record, the manifesto said Labour would "ensure that decision making on monetary policy is more effective, open, accountable, and free from short-term political manipulation."

What was not expected, however, was the speed at which the new Chancellor would act. Without warning Mr Brown brought forward to yesterday the regular monthly meeting with Eddie George, the Governor. He raised interest rates and then declared it would be the last such meeting.

In future the Bank will call the shots on interest rates. At the same time the Old Lady's internal structure is to be beefed-up, starting at the top with a reform of the Court, the equivalent of a board of directors. Finally, the Bank's role in policing UK banks will also come under close scrutiny.

In a pre-emptive and brilliantly orchestrated manoeuvre yesterday Mr Brown sent a seven-page letter to Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, outlining his radical plans. For good measure the text of the Chancellor's letter was released, illustrating just how much work was done while Labour was in opposition. Nevertheless, the massive shift leaves many questions unanswered.

Who, for example, will be the second Deputy Governor alongside Howard Davies and will Mr Davies in future be in



The Bank of England faces the most fundamental shake-up since it was founded nearly 303 years ago

charge of supervising banks rather than working on monetary and interest rate policy? And who will be the six members of the new Monetary Policy Committee alongside Mr George and his two Deputy Governors? The Chancellor indicated that the new posts would be filled "soon".

But back to yesterday's announcement. First to go was the "Ken and Eddie" show. These were the regular monthly meetings set up by Kenneth Clarke and the Governor at which monetary policy and inflation targets were discussed and thus the level of interest rates were set. For some months now the Bank has been arguing for a rate rise to curb early inflationary pressures beginning to appear in the raw economic data. Mr Clarke had resisted such calls but Mr Brown duly obliged with a 0.25 per cent hike in rates yesterday. But, he added that in future "operational" decisions on interest rate policy will be made by a new Monetary Policy Committee comprising the Governor, the

Deputy Governors and six members. The decisions will be made by a vote of the committee, with each member having one vote. If there is no majority, the Governor will have the casting vote.

Reform of the Court of the Bank of England is another central plank in the Brown agenda. To outsiders the Court has been viewed as a job for "the great and the good", and generally male habitues of banking parlours. Mr Brown says: "The Court of the Bank of England will review the performance of the Bank, including that of the Monetary Policy Committee. The Court will be substantially reformed to make it representative of the whole of the United Kingdom and to take account of the full range of Britain's industrial and business sectors."

New legislation will be needed to amend the Bank of England Act 1946 to institute many of the reforms and Mr Brown promised that these would be forthcoming in the Queen's Speech. He said: "The Bank will of course remain in

public ownership. The legislation will set up the new monetary policy framework, and provide for greater accountability."

The sub-text of Mr Brown's New Monetary Policy Framework letter also appears to have a European flavour. While the Chancellor again yesterday appeared to rule out Britain joining a single European currency in the first wave, he has kept his options open to sign up the second time round, perhaps in the year 2002. Even now, though, attitudes to a single currency appear to be hardening across the Continent at the domestic political level.

There are those bankers who believe that achieving the single currency, as envisaged in its present form, is no longer practical. Peter Birch, the respected chief executive of Abbey National, told *The Times* last month: "Of all the bankers I meet here and in Europe there is a 50/50 split over joining. In any event

there are no prizes just for being first."

One of the criteria laid down for countries joining the single currency is to have an independent central bank. Mr Brown made several noises in that direction in yesterday's statement. For example, he said that in future the Bank's role as the Government's agent for debt management, the sale of gilts, the oversight of the gilt market and cash management would be transferred to the Treasury. This would be in line with the hands-off role played by central banks in Europe and avoid any possible conflict of interest.

The other intriguing area in which the Chancellor hinted at far-reaching reforms is the supervision of banks. Here the Bank has a mixed record, with names such as Johnson Matthey Bankers, Bank of Credit and Commerce International and Barings coming back to haunt it. But since the Barings collapse the Bank has introduced a series of its own reforms to banking and risk

supervision. Unusually, senior Bank directors have publicly warned in recent speeches of the dangers of "star" City salaries and how they can encourage undue risk taking.

Mr Brown is well aware that another costly bank failure would look very bad for the Government of the day and he, for one, is anxious to avoid having to appear at the dispatch box to explain yet another banking disaster. That is why supervision was accorded such prominence. In yesterday's mission statement Mr Brown said that one Deputy Governor will support the Governor on monetary policy and the other will support the Governor on "financial stability", which in Bank-speak means regulation. This appears to be the clearest indicator yet that policing UK banks will remain as it is with the proviso that the status quo might change depending on how plans to reform the present system of City regulation in general take shape.

The Chancellor's statement yesterday also illustrates how much parliamentary attitudes to the Bank have changed. Right up until last summer there appeared to be a growing political consensus that the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street should become a central bank with its supervisory role taken over by a Banking Commission. That may even be the eventual outcome of the latest reforms. But by last autumn attitudes were changing. The Treasury Select Committee, through which the Bank will now report to Parliament, shied away from recommending a separation of duties. In Westminster, normally sceptic MPs were heard to say how much better the Bank was performing and it is this view that appears to have prevailed.

Cosy tea-time chats at the Bank are clearly no longer the order of the day. The Bank signalled last July that its days of secrecy are gone and Mr Brown's intervention yesterday merely underlines that fact. The pitfall Mr Brown has to avoid now is in introducing too many names and extra positions to oversee his reforms. Such names as are put forward for these posts may not yet be regarded as the great and the good of the City. But give them a few years at the top and access to a few privileges and they might soon become just that. That would be a pity.

Private lives

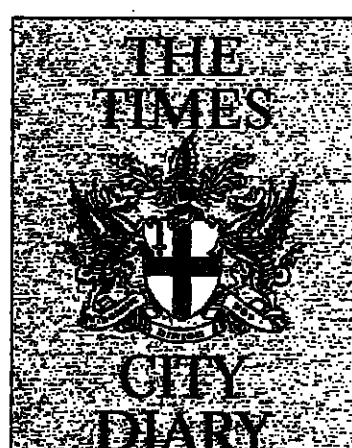
THE first tax self-assessment demands are only five weeks old, and already the professions are jockeying for those huge fees we will all have to pay them for work previously done by the Inland Revenue. Much of the private client side at Theodore Goddard have upped and set up on their own. Joyce Smythe, private client partner, has combined with another Theodore Goddard high-flyer, Caroline Barkham, at the imaginatively named Smythe Barkham, taking

another half a dozen lawyers with them. This blows a large hole in what could be a highly remunerative line of work for Theodore Goddard, and it is unlikely to be the last such defection among the City's legal heavyweights keen to service all those high net worth individuals seeking expensive advice on how to minimise their tax bills and put one over on the new Chancellor.

FROM PDM's latest review of pension fund performance: "This book is not about short-term movements. If we step back from the 'snakes and ladders' of the markets and look at recent events in their long-term context, this latest period is not exceptional." Translated: "We are the fund manager that spent much of the stock market bull run sitting on a pile of cash. We believe in a long-term approach, because short-term we got it wrong."

Footloose

AS MARK DUVAL, close adviser to porn king Paul Raymond, settles out of court, his partner in the firm of Amhurst Brown Colomboni has suffered a reversal. The romance between Count Carlo Colomboni, 57



years young, and someone called Sinitta, 30 years his junior and a 1980s pop singer, has ended. Count Carlo, former escort of Shirley Bassey and Raine Spencer too, is footloose again. Perhaps he might get in touch with another friend, one Pamela Bordes, whom he introduced to polite society. When Duval returns to the office he might ask Count Carlo where he picked up his title, too. Apparently he comes from Tonypandy, south Wales, a town rich in aristocratic heritage, where his parents ran a restaurant.

Mixed fortunes

THE winners and losers are gradually crawling out from under the

Lanica Trust stone. Actually, we have yet to spot a winner from Andrew Regan's farcical bid for the Co-op, but there are plenty of losers, including the associate of a well-known private client broker who is said to be sitting on 400,000 near-worthless Lanica Trust shares and waiting, petrified, for the shares to be relisted. Hambros was up for £10 million if the bid succeeded, of course, but emerged with its reputation in tatters. And there is Damien McCrystal, once City diary editor for a rival publication. Damien went from UBS to be chief spin-doctor for Galileo, the Lanica vehicle now in liquidation, and is still employed there if a little at a loose end. He is now being forced to deny persistent Square Mile rumour that he has lost out on a success fee of a million quid. Half a million then? "Not in the right ball-park."

Lloyd's sevens

FINAL proof that the corporate big-hitters have taken over Lloyd's of London. They manage a virtual clean sweep of the annual Lloyd's seven-side rugby tournament today. There is only one traditional Lloyd's member's agent among the 31 teams fielded, the rest bearing names such as Aon, Sedgwick and Willis Corroon—those last two fielding separate teams despite all those bid rumours. Bearing the standard for the old guard is Greenwich Lloyd's Underwriting, whose chances of success, director

Tim Gunter tells me, are not enhanced by having just seven male employees under the age of 35. The big boys have been known to plant ringers—one used to fly over from Paris every year a French international in its employ there. The Lloyd's sevens are always good fun, not least for the third-string competition in which the worst teams are selected, in reverse Darwinian style, for a final match. No one from the by now exhausted teams is allowed to leave the pitch until someone, anyone, has scored. Play has been known to continue for some time.

MARTIN WALLER



Pamela Bordes was introduced to polite society by Mark Duval

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"I miss Kenneth Clarke, at least he'd let people have a bit of a lie in"

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Pearson in £1.25bn chase for Fairfax

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

PEARSON, publisher of the *Financial Times*, has had high-level talks aimed at clearing the way for an A\$2.5 billion (£1.25 billion) bid for Fairfax, the Australian publishing group, in competition with Kerry Packer.

A spokesman for the Australian Government confirmed yesterday that Stephen Hill, chief executive of the *Financial Times*, met John Howard, the Australian Prime Minister, for an hour on Monday with four representatives of a consortium called Australian Independent Newspapers.

The consortium has financial backing from Australian life insurers Colonial Mutual, National Mutual and AMP, as well as a promise of debt funding from ANZ, the bank.

Pearson is primarily interested in the *Australian Financial Review*, the local equivalent of the *Financial Times*, which it tried to buy from the receiver of Fairfax when it collapsed in 1991.

Pearson's move comes as the Australian Government prepares to unveil details of its planned shake-up of the country's media ownership laws,

which are at present a confusing variety of restrictions for different forms of media.

The new laws are widely expected to ease restrictions on ownership and lead to a change in the ownership structure of Fairfax, whose newspaper interests also include *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Melbourne Age* — two of the five most profitable newspapers in the world.

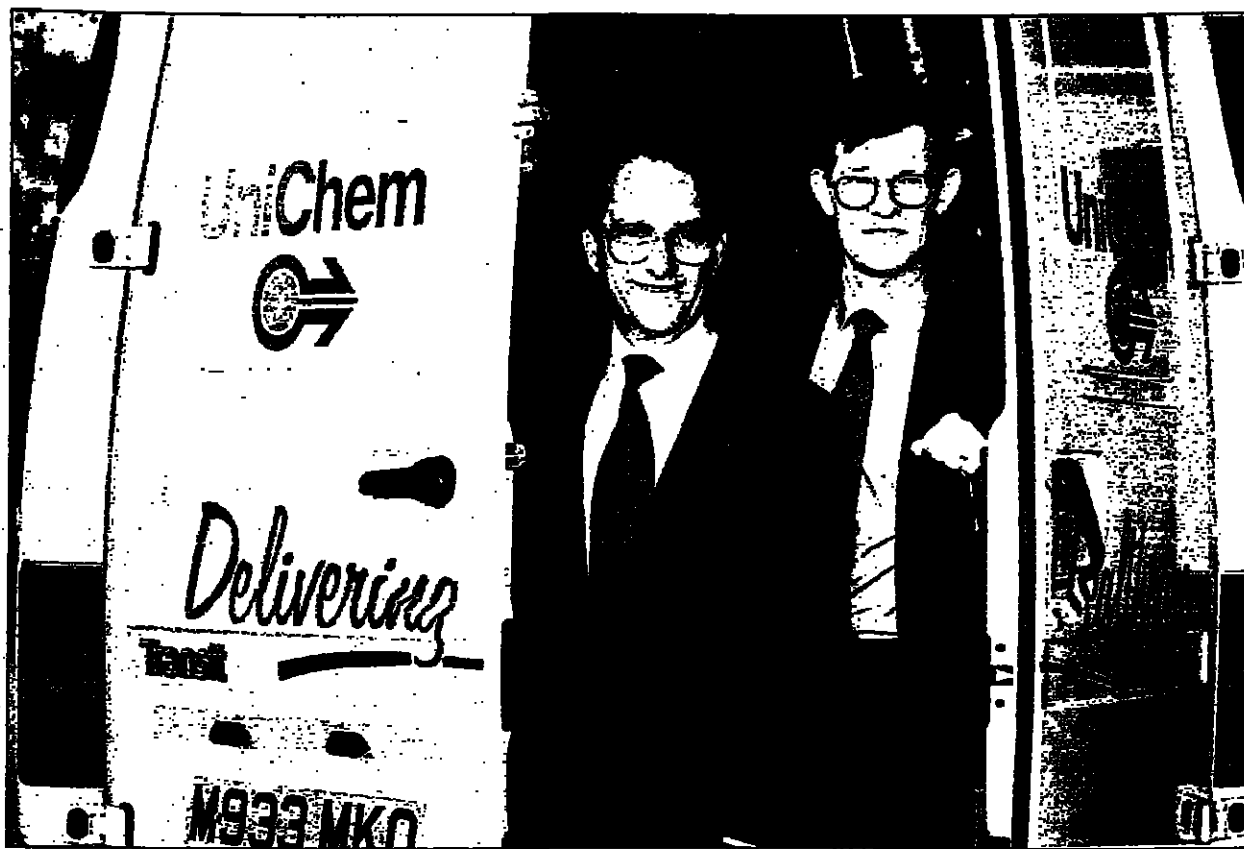
As present Mr Packer, who has made no secret of his desire to take control of Fairfax, is limited to a 15 per cent stake in the group because he also owns the Nine television network in Australia, while New Zealand-based Brierley Investments, which bought a 20 per cent stake in Fairfax from Conrad Black, the Canadian media owner, for A\$447 million in December, is limited to a 25 per cent stake.

Last week, however, Mr Howard signalled his intention to allow a single operator to take control of the group after describing Fairfax's current shareholding structure as very unstable. Mr Howard said: "The Fairfax share register is very unstable and you really don't have anybody running the company or alternatively not in an identifiable way. I mean, that's not meant to be critical of the management, but the fact is it's a pretty unstable situation."

Kerry Stokes, chairman of the Seven television network has also thrown his hat into the ring for Fairfax, declining to rule himself out as a possible bidder. He said: "The Seven network will look at its position when we find out what the Government has decided. If it is commercially viable, we'd certainly look at taking a position in Fairfax."



Packer: limited to 15 per cent



Jeff Harris, left, and Geoff Cooper are to see their pay rises uncoupled from increases for other UniChem staff

UniChem chiefs receive pay tonic

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

DIRECTORS of UniChem, the pharmaceutical wholesaler and retailer that failed in January to buy Lloyds Chemists after a year-long bid battle, are set for large pay rises and bonus payments.

The company, a co-operative before flotation in 1990, is to

stop pegging executive directors' pay rises to increases given to other staff. Remuneration consultants have said directors' pay is below market level, so it is to be increased over the next two years.

Annual bonuses of up to 25 per cent of salary will be introduced this year for executive directors and senior executives.

They do not depend on earnings performance; executives will benefit "if the group and/or their division achieves the annual budgeted performance, after allowing for the cost of the bonuses, and/or the relevant executive has achieved a satisfactory personal performance".

Jeff Harris, chief executive

and highest paid, had total pay of £309,000 last year, up from £284,000. The second-highest paid, Barry Andrews, retail director, earned £236,000 including £18,000 bonus (£192,000). Geoff Cooper, finance director, was third-best paid, on £234,000 (£214,000). Mr Harris and Mr Cooper had no annual bonus.

UK rail firms look for Australian connection

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT IN SYDNEY

NATIONAL EXPRESS, Virgin Rail and GB Railways emerged as rival bidders for Australia's prestigious but loss-making long-distance passenger train operation, which is expected to carry a price tag of up to A\$100 million (about £50 million).

The three UK train operators have been shortlisted to bid for Australia's three long-distance passenger services. These comprise The Ghan, which runs between Adelaide and Alice Springs, The Indian

Pacific, between Perth and Sydney, and The Overlander, which runs between Melbourne and Adelaide.

The services, which are mainly used by tourists and are regarded as being Australia's equivalent to the Orient Express, are being sold as part of the Government's mass privatisation of Australia National, its rail business, which also includes rail freight services and railway workshops in Tasmania and South Australia.

Sotheby's trims loss in first quarter to \$6.8m

BY OUR CITY STAFF

SHARES in Sotheby's Holdings rose 35p to 990p after the auction group reported a first-quarter loss of \$6.8 million, an improvement on the previous year's \$8.2 million loss.

Auction sales rose from \$155 million to \$207 million. Sotheby's said: "Due to the seasonal nature of the art auction market, auction sales in the first quarter have historically represented approximately 10-12 per cent of total sales for the year and the first quarter is traditionally a loss

period for the company. Consequently, first-quarter results are not indicative of expected full-year results."

The group is pleased with the strength of auction sales and its financial performance so far this year. It said the \$35.8 million raised in Hong Kong last week was the highest since 1989. The highlight of the week was the sale of a collection of Ming and Qing dynasty porcelain.

Losses per share fell to 12 cents from 15 cents.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Pilot pay dispute at American settled

THE long-running dispute over pilot pay at American Airlines, the second-largest carrier in the US, has ended with agreement on a five-year labour contract. The pilots approved the contract by a 70 per cent majority, averting the threat of a second strike.

The settlement means that American can go ahead with a \$6 billion order for 103 new aeroplanes from Boeing. Part of the dispute centred on the pilots' refusal to fly the new jets, but they have ended their opposition in return for a 9 per cent pay increase and share options. The dispute caused a sharp drop in American's profits over the last quarter as the strike threat drove customers to book with other airlines.

Air France aid battle

SIX European airlines — among them British Airways, Air UK and British Midland — have lodged a formal request to the European Court in Luxembourg to cancel a French rescue of Air France, the state-controlled airline, court sources said. The airlines said that the court should annul a decision by the European Commission in July 1994, authorising the French Government to give the airline Fr20 billion in aid.

Sidlaw dividend held

SIDLAW, the flexible packaging company that has been widely restructured, is holding the interim dividend at 1p a share. In the six months to March 31, pre-tax profits from continuing businesses were £1.7 million (£1.4 million loss), on turnover of £77.2 million (£78.1 million). Overall pre-tax profit from disposals was £17.3 million (£4 million loss) after a £17.3 million profit from disposals. Adjusted earnings were 2.3p a share (1.7p loss).

Tesco's £630m Irish deal

THE European Commission has approved the sale to Tesco of Associated British Foods' retail and related business in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The £630 million takeover was approved by the merger taskforce, and covers 75 stores in the Republic and 34 in Northern Ireland, with total sales of £1.24 billion. In the year to September, operating profits were £58 million, with net assets of about £170 million.

FI wins ministry work

FI, the computer services group, is to take charge of the entire software system used by the Department for Education and Employment in a £13 million outsourcing contract. The five-year deal is FI's first big public sector contract. About 160 civil servants will be transferred to FI. An £11 million contract to design and support computer programs used by Whitbread, the brewing and restaurants group, has been renewed.

Waterford rejects bid

WATERFORD FOODS has formally rejected a £268 million bid from Avonmore Foods, its Irish rival. Waterford, made up of Waterford Foods and Waterford Co-operative Society, said that the offer did not reflect its underlying value nor "its strategic positioning in key markets and the contribution it can make to any merged entity in the future". Waterford hinted that improved merger terms might be considered.

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THE TIMES HUNT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Hot



PREVIEW 1
From Hollywood actress Kathleen Turner playing Tallulah Bankhead at the Minerva, Chichester...



PREVIEW 2
... and Nigel Kennedy dusting off his renowned interpretation of the Elgar Violin Concerto...

THE TIMES ARTS



PREVIEW 3
... to Steven Spielberg's long-awaited Jurassic Park sequel, The Lost World...



PREVIEW 4
... and Twyla Tharp's company at the Edinburgh Festival: we pick the best shows of the summer

From Disney stage spectacular to Seurat exhibition: *Times* critics select the unmissable shows of the coming months

Hot tickets for summer nights

Benedict Nightingale

When it comes to visual extravagance and high-tech bravura, nothing is likely to challenge the Disney Organisation's *Beauty and the Beast*, at £10 million plus the most expensive show ever to have hit London. Both *The Fix*, a musical about politics opening at the Donmar on Monday, and *Damn Yankees*, which brings Jerry Lewis to the Adelphi on June 4, will doubtless look modest beside it. But in the weeks after the *Beast* slouches into the Dominion next Tuesday, there is plenty of competition in other fields.

Revivals? Though it will be fun to see if Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* (May 14, Olivier) has retained the frisson it had in the faraway 1960s, most eyes will be on the launch of the Globe in early June and on Peter Hall's remarkably busy season at the Old Vic.

The replica of Shakespeare's playhouse on Bankside, already open to the sun and the tourists, will officially open to theatregoers in early June with performances of Henry V, boasting Mark Sydes in God-for-Harry mode, and *The Winter's Tale*. Odder, more ambitious stuff follows in late August in the form of two pieces by lesser Jacobean: Middleton's cheerfully satiric *Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and Beaumont and Fletcher's grim *Maid's Tragedy*.

Half a mile away, Sir Peter directs Michael Pennington and Felicity Kendal in Chekhov's *Seagull*, opening this Friday, and on June 27 gives us Ben Kingsley and Alan Howard as the tramps in the famous play whose English-language premiere he himself staged 40 years ago: Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. A week later comes a Restoration comedy, Vanbrugh's *Provoked Wife*, with Pennington as the fatuous Brute and the up-and-coming Victoria Hamilton.

And new plays? *The Vic* is busy here, too. The author of *The Steward of Christendom*, Sebastian Barry, delves yet again into offbeat Irish history in his *Prayers for Sherkin* (May 19), and a young British dramatist, Samuel Adamson, ventures to Australia and Sydney operaland for *Grace Note* (Jul 7).

Meanwhile, the National seeks to prove that Patrick Marber's poker-game comedy *Dealer's Choice* was not a one-off by staging his *Closer* (May 29) and follows it up on June 20 with Richard Eyre's production of the latest David Hare, *Amy's View*, in which Judi Dench plays a famous actress battling with her daughter. And watch out for *The McDonagh Trilogy*, which the Royal Court opens at the Duke of York's on July 26. With his new *Skull in Connemara* and *Lonesome West* joining *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, and his *Cripple of Inishmaan* continuing its run at the National, Martin McDonagh will have four blackish comedies about the Irish outback in London—and we'll have the chance to assess the theatre's fastest-growing reputation.

Nothing new in Stratford after the *Alec Jennings* Hamlet opens tomorrow, and at Chichester most excitement in the studio theatre. Though the main-house offerings include Coward's *Billie's Spirit* (Jun 17), with Maureen Lipman and Twiggy, the Minerva brings us Leslie Caron as George Sand (Jun 9), Kathleen Turner as Tallulah Bankhead (Jul 1), Julie Christie as Marguerite Duras's Suzanne Andler (Jul 22) and Makarova in Shaw's seldom-done *Misalliance* (Aug 19). And so off to the Edinburgh Festival, which starts on August 10 and this year offers Peter Stein's production of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*, Stéphane Braunschweig's version of *Measure for Measure*, and a revival of the play that had its premiere in Auld Reekie nearly 50 years ago: T.S. Eliot's *Cocktail Party*.

Richard Morrison

devised a Meltdown Festival (Jun 2-Jul 5) that includes such diverse spectacles as a concert by 100 violins, and one of the world's great violinists, Gidon Kremer, playing tangos. Even more extraordinary string happenings can be found at the City of London Festival (Jun 19-Jul 10), which features a season by "the gogmagogs" at the Bridewell Theatre. The gogmagogs are a string ensemble specialising in physical theatre. More conventionally, the City of London also recreated one of the musical glories of the Baroque era: the *Great Salzburg Mass* by Heinrich Biber (St Paul's Cathedral, Jul 3).

Fans of wind instruments, in all shapes and sizes, should head to Sunderland for the new Great North Wind Festival (Jun 14-21), featuring such delicacies as the British Tuba Quartet and that zany recorder consort, the Amsterdam

Debra Craine

modern dance, and few would argue with that assessment. The work is massive, with 24 dancers, five solo singers, 40 chorus singers and a 33-piece orchestra. It opens at the Coliseum on June 5. The Coliseum is also the venue for this summer's most ambitious season, the return of the Kirov Ballet to London. The visitors from St Petersburg are presenting eight different programmes over five weeks (Jul 8-Aug 9). *Swan Lake*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and the *Fountain of Bakhchisarai* are back again, presumably by popular demand, but the company's production of *Don Quixote* has never been seen before in Britain. Neither has its version of Balanchine's *Symphony in C*.

The Kirov is also offering a new all-Fokine programme,



The most expensive show ever to hit London: Disney's £10 million *Beauty and the Beast*, which opens next week

Loeki Stardust Quartet. Fans of bel canto, meanwhile, should book into Cardiff for the *Singer of the World Competition* (Jun 16-21)—or alternatively, tune in to BBC2 and Radio 3, both supplying nightly coverage.

Best summer offering from the London orchestras should be the LSO's Ravel series (early June, Barbican) directed by that old master of the languid touch, André Previn. Best from the regions will surely be the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra's extraordinary EMI Gala (Symphony Hall, Jul 5), conducted by Simon Rattle, with a world premiere by Mark Anthony Turnage, and including Nigel Kennedy playing Elgar.

What have I overlooked? Well, the small matter of the Edinburgh Festival (Aug 10-30) brings us Valery Gergiev conducting five concerts with his Kirov and Rotterdam orchestras, and Peter Hurford playing all Bach's organ works in an epic 15 recitals. Oh yes, and don't forget the Proms—but they will be surveyed in *The Times* tomorrow.

with Isabelle Fokine, the choreographer's granddaughter, restaging his *Spectre de la Rose*, *The Dying Swan* and the *Polovtsian Dances* from *Prince Igor*.

Students of classical ballet might like to do a little compare and contrast this summer. While the Kirov performs Balanchine at the Coliseum, the Royal Ballet is performing Balanchine at Covent Garden. *Symphony in C* shows up as part of a mixed bill (from Jul 5), the final ballet programme at the Royal Opera House before closure.

Yet again, the Edinburgh Festival is fielding an impressive dance programme. The American Twyla Tharp launches the festival with her feisty and high-energy dance-works, while the San Francisco Ballet makes its first visit to the UK for 17 years. Balanchine and Morris are on the San Francisco menu, along with the British premiere of *The Dance House*, a piece by our own David Bintley.

A major exhibition by the versatile Flemish artist Jan Fabre (opening May 17) is the ambitious multi-city initiative undertaken by Bath, Bristol and Cardiff. Equally well-known for epic theatre works, Fabre will bring dramatic flair to his installations in various historic Bath locations (until Jun 14), his bizarre insect sculptures at Bristol's Arncliffe (to Jul 6) and his monumental drawings on silk at Cardiff's Oriel Gallery (until Jun 21).

The young British sculptor Catry de Mondchaux will be given her most substantial British exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery (May 30-Jul 27). Unlike so many of her contemporaries, she favours sumptuous materials. But the results, while openly sensual, are often disquieting as well.

Darkness prevails at the Hayward Gallery, where Tatsuo Miyajima takes over the lower spaces and transforms them with LED (light-emitting diode) numbers (Jun 19-Aug 17). Flashing from the walls in red, green and blue, or moving across the blackened gallery on motorised vehicles, they will show this young Japanese artist's obsession with time and movement at full stretch. Upstairs at the Hayward, the art of the Harlem Renaissance is charted by *Rhapsodies in Black*. For the first time in Britain, the painting, sculpture and photography of jazz age New York will show how black culture energised American modernism.

Multi-racial inspiration nourishes the sculpture of Stephen Cox, whose career will be summarised at the Dulwich Picture Gallery (Jun 25-Sep 28). Occupying space within Soane's great building and throughout the grounds as well, the exhibits span the last 15 years and reveal how stimulated Cox has been by the historic sculpture of Italy, India and Egypt.

The major event at the Tate Gallery, marking its centenary with special events throughout the season, will be a retrospective of Ellsworth Kelly's work (Jun 12-Sep 7). Probably the most admired of senior abstract painters in America, he spent formative years in

VISUAL ART

Richard Cork

Paris after serving as a soldier in the Second World War. Meeting Braque and Brancusi helped him to develop his uncompromising style, with its emphasis on purity of line, form and heraldic colour.

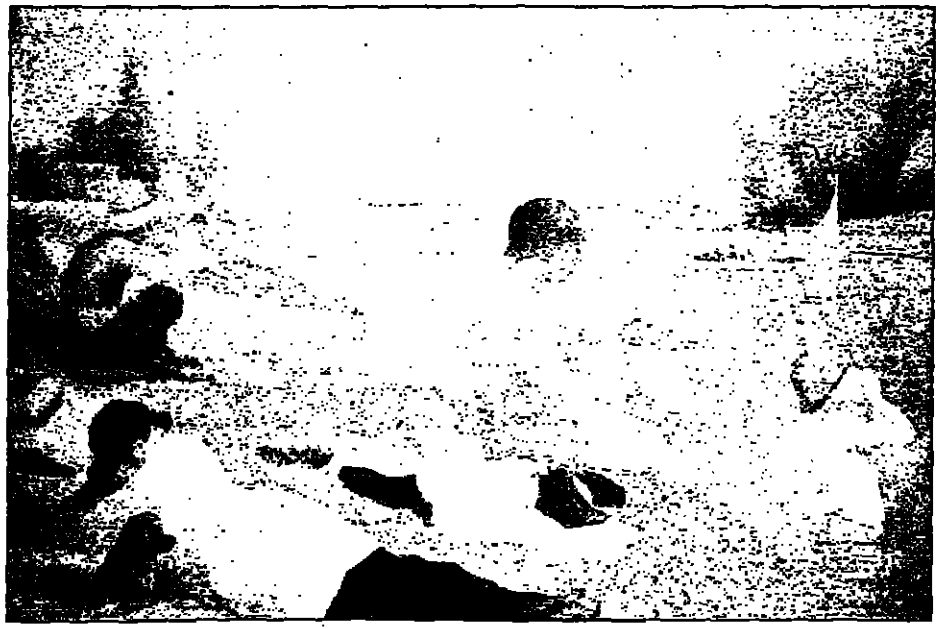
The Kelly show will be complemented, at the end of July, by a generous loan show of Mondrian's work from the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague (until Nov 30). His trajectory, from early Dutch riverscapes to later abstractions in Paris, will be traced in more than 60 works.

But the most beautiful London exhibition will undoubtedly be at the National Gallery (Jul 2-Sep 28). *Seurat's*

sublime *Bathers at Asnières* will become the focus of a fascinating show, bringing together all his preliminary studies for the painting and placing it in the context of related pictures by Poussin, Ingres, Manet and Van Gogh.

Finally, the Edinburgh Festival pays tribute to a local hero with a grand Raeburn exhibition at the Royal Scottish Academy (Aug 1-Oct 5). Around 70 of his most accomplished portraits will comprise the first substantial survey of his work for 40 years.

Festival visitors in search of more modern excitement will find it at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (Jul 5-Sep 14), where Gabrielle Keller's outstanding collection of Dada and Surrealist work will be displayed in all its haunting, dream-like entirety.



Seurat's *Bathers at Asnières*: the focus of a fascinating show at the National Gallery

OPERA

Rodney Milnes

The Royal Opera has plenty of unfinished business before it goes on the road after the last performance in the old house—*Meistersinger*—on July 12. The annual Verdi Festival presents new productions of two "first" versions on successive evenings, the 1847 *Macbeth*, conducted by Edward Downes and directed by Phyllida Lloyd (Jun 27), and Ian Judge's staging of the 1857 *Simon Boccanegra* (Jun 28), with Domingo and conducted by Mark Elder. There are revivals of *Rigoletto* (Jun 10) and the standard *Boccanegra* (May 30), with Kiri Te Kanawa conducted by Soldi, and for those who can have too much Verdi, there's Haitink conducting a revival of Trevor Nunn's production of *Katya Kabanova* (May 23).

Things are quieter at the Coliseum, where, as a result of Orwellian doublethink, "stabilisation" funding has led to English National Opera's cancellation of Gavin Bryars's new opera: its replacement by a revival of *Don Pasquale* (Jun 25) seems an unnecessarily sadistic act of revenge on ENO's part. Plenty of action in the regions, though: Carlo Rizzi conducts David Pountney's new production of *Boccanegra* for the Welsh National (May 19), and Opera North offers a new *Così fan tutte* conducted by Claire Gibault and directed by Richard Jones, fresh from sinking the Titanic on Broadway.

Festival time: John Eliot Gardiner makes his Glyndebourne debut conducting

Graham Vick's new staging of Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* (May 18), and Jérôme Savary, another debutant, directs Rossini's *Comte Ory* (Jul 20), a zany comedy far too long absent from Glyndebourne's repertoire. Anja Silja returns to star in *The Makropoulos Case* (Jun 27), and the stunning Peter Sellars' *Theodor* is back on August 3.

There's important new work at Aldeburgh, with a double Turnage premiere at the Maltins on June 13, and at the Almeida, where Roderick Watkins's highly praised *Juniper Tree* and Battistelli's *Cenci* receive their UK premieres on June 30 and July 11 respectively. Garsington presents the first UK staging of Strauss's *Egyptian Helen* (Jun 22), with Susan Bullock conducted by Elgar Howarth. More traditional tastes are catered for by Mozart and Haydn.

Unmissable opera at Edinburgh this year includes the Royal Opera's first away-from-Covent-Garden new production: Mark Morris's staging of Rameau's sarky comedy *Plafie* (Aug 11)—and the rarely performed first version of Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, the one combined with *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, in a co-production by Scottish Opera and the Nottingham Playhouse (Aug 20). And it will be hard to stay away from the Usher Hall for Jane Eaglen and Bryn Terfel in a concert performance of the last act of *Die Walküre* (Aug 28), and for a starry cast in *Lucia di Lammermoor* conducted by Charles Mackerras (Aug 17).

CINEMA

Geoff Brown

David Cronenberg's film of *Crash* has passed through cinemas with scant attention in other countries, except from the director's hardened fans. But Britain's tabloid press have ensured that all eyes will be on this adaptation of J.G. Ballard's book when it finally arrives in this country, uncult.

On June 5, Cronenberg documents Ballard's alliance of sexual thrills and car crashes with chilly bravura, though it gets monotonous after a while. More controversy is headed this way when *The Devil's Own* opens on June 20. This thoughtless Hollywood concoction finds veteran New York cop Harrison Ford unwittingly sheltering Brad Pitt's IRA terrorist, in the United States on an arms-buying mission. A romantic, lopsided view of the Irish problem is compounded by plotting that drives the film into abject silliness.

Hackles may rise for different reasons over Spike Lee's *Get On The Bus*, in which the director uses the black community's Million Man March

of 1995 (no women allowed) as an opportunity to mount his soapbox. Still, you can always rely on Clint Eastwood. The weathered icon returns among us as director and star on May 30 when *Absolute Power* makes its debut. Compared to *Unforgotten* this is minor fare, but Eastwood's presentation of the old story about an accidental onlooker at a murder scene is so solid that pleasure can be guaranteed. Eastwood plays a burglar, at work on a ritz Washington house just when the President (Gene Hackman) arrives for some hanky-panky.

What of the rest of the world? Slim pickings, as usual. French veteran Claude Lelouch may strain audiences' patience with *Men, Women: A User's Manual*, but Finland's chief export, Aki Kaurismäki, is back on top form with *Drifting Clouds*, a sad, funny, and ultimately optimistic tale of a married couple fighting the country's recession. Luc Besson will make a big noise with his futuristic adventure *The Fifth Element*, though an American setting, English dialogue, and the presence of Bruce Willis scarcely make it very French. All three open on June 6.

No summer is complete without the blockbusters. *Titanic* will not be berthing; in Britain this is due in December. But you can hitch a ride and be hijacked by Nicolas Cage in *Con Air*, the latest piece of slap-bang-wallp from producer Jerry Bruckheimer. This arrives in June, as does *Batman and Robin*, with George Clooney as Gotham's caped crusader and Arnold Schwarzenegger as the bone-chilling villain Mr Freeze. Then Spielberg and Michael Crichton revisit *Jurassic Park* in *The Lost World* (Jul 18). Finally, if you are not popcorned out, the year's second volcano picture, set in Los Angeles, erupts in mid August. It is imaginatively titled *Volcano*.

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DANCE

After 25 years, the intensity is undiminished: Siobhan Davies celebrates a personal milestone



RISING STAR

Disney heroine: Julie-Anah Brighten has won the lead role in *Beauty and the Beast*

THE TIMES ARTS



MUSIC 1

Shine man David Helfgott takes the audience vote, but no prizes for pianistic discipline



MUSIC 2

Daniele Gatti is in inspiring form conducting the RPO in Mahler's Fifth at the Albert Hall

A lifetime of being in the right place

Allen Robertson meets choreographer Siobhan Davies as she celebrates 25 years at the top of her profession

She has been creating dances for 25 years, has run her own company for the past decade and received virtually every award the arts community could shower on her, including an Olivier last year. But ask Siobhan Davies about her success and the answer that comes back is modest. "I look forward to the future because I want to get better. Looking at the past only reminds you of niggling failures?"

Neither Davies nor her works shout at you. Instead, they exude a quiet intensity. Her dances shimmer and undulate, rather than glimmer or explode. Even when her choreography turns fast and dense it never loses its essential lyricism because Davies is a poet of movement.

At 16, she was one of the first students to step through the newly opened doors of the London Contemporary Dance School. Though she had no previous dance training, she became a member of London Contemporary Dance Theatre with breathtaking speed. Just a year later, in 1967, she had begun what was to turn into a distinguished performing career.

She stopped performing with abrupt deliberateness on November 3, 1983. "It was in Bath and I was dancing with Second Stride and lots of friends came down and wolf-whistled."

"I had really enjoyed performing, but at that particular moment, if you want the honest truth, I could not bear the actual preparation for performance. I just could not face one more warm-up."

"I still miss it," she admits. "If I could somehow just inject immediate physical courage and physical knowledge then, yes, I would love to perform again. But, no, I'm not going to."

Davies, who had first tried her hand at choreography as early as 1972, felt that the way forward involved stepping outside the per-

forming process. "I had to sit quietly and look at the work. Not being in it was a big learning tool."

"One of the biggest difficulties for dancers who turn into choreographers is that their physical being is inside the work; therefore, if they feel a sensation, they automatically imagine that the sensation is coming across to the viewer. This feels

good, so it must look good." But that isn't necessarily so.

"For example, there's a moment in my new piece, *Bank*, where the dancers must feel they're in rush hour at King's Cross during a bomb scare. I can see that it's working visually, but I know from a 'doing' point of view that if I'd been in it, I'd have despaired."

But since I'm sitting outside I can catch them down. I can say 'It's working. Keep going.'"

When *Bank* premieres in Blackpool on Friday, the dancers' sense of chaos will have long since been transformed into what she could see all along. If not, then she will have changed it into something else. Davies and her small team of chosen dancers work both intimately and co-operatively towards their shared goals.

For this spring tour there are only six dancers. In the autumn there will be eight. She explains her casting strategy by saying the budget really only stretches to seven performers.

Though she is one of Britain's most renowned artists, Davies is financially unable to sustain her

company as a full-time concern. "It makes me blanch what the dancers have to go through in order to be the artists that they are. They are earning far less than anybody in this field. I mean, anybody who manages them, who plays music for them, crews for them, directs them, anyone who is in the theatre for them, is earning a far greater purse than they are."

Okay, it is probably the same for the corps de ballet at the Royal and I know things are very tight in New York right now, but I can't say all artists are suffering, so we should suffer too, because I only have responsibility for this group of people. We have got to keep trying to raise the profile of dancers and not

necessarily force them to become teachers or choreographers or whatever else."

For the first time last year, Davies' management was able to guarantee the dancers six months' wages. "It's in two three-month blocks," she explains. "Which means they have to find their own methods of survival — financial, emotional and artistic — in the other blocks. Which I know is hard; but at the same time, I've got to be very clear about this. I don't think they work for me because they want me to 'care' for them, or that I should in any form dominate their artistic lives."

Davies' company has put in a lottery application aimed at securing a studio of its own. Currently it rehearses catch as catch can in

venues from Greenwich to Euston. The administration office is in Islington, the scenery stored somewhere else.

"A studio would give me a professional standing," she says, "and now there are times when I feel amateur, when I may not go into a studio at all because I needed to have booked it way ahead in advance."

"Obviously I don't want to be indulgent about it and say I need yards and yards of expensive London space at my disposal just because I want it. But the truth is, we're so unused to being greedy that we sometimes don't know how to demand what should be our due."

As Davies continues to pursue her goals she insists that she will not be badgered into areas she doesn't think suit her or her dancers. She is thrilled that companies such as *Adventures in Motion Pictures* have had a huge popular success, but insists that the *Riverdance* phenomenon has nothing to do with the world as she knows it.

"We tease each other in the studio sometimes and I say I'm going to do a musical next. They all look at me in absolute horror. Then we try a few musicals steps and we all go, 'well maybe not this year.'"

"I have no desire to throw my arms out and try and encompass an enormous amount. I only want to do what is absolutely needed at the moment. Theatres, funding bodies, grants applications all ask 'What's the brand new thing that you're going to do?'"

"Well, it's not going to be brand new. Is Howard Hodgkin brand new? Is Damien Hirst going to be brand new every time? That's not what an artist does. I simply want to be in the right place."



Siobhan Davies: "I look forward to the future. Looking at the past only reminds you of failures"

CONCERTS: The much-hyped David Helfgott pleases his fans; new boy and old timer in form on the podium

Brave, but not yet brilliant

David Helfgott
Festival Hall

There is a remarkable irony in the fact that David Helfgott, the Australian pianist of *Shine* fame whose mental breakdown was partly caused by the inordinate pressures of public performance, is now playing to capacity audiences in prestigious venues all over the world. What is more, he appears to be thoroughly enjoying himself, giving the lie to the charge of exploitation voiced in some quarters.

Audiences love him too: they hang on every note, enjoy every gasp the crowd's own commentary throughout and give him a standing ovation when it's all over. Even his unconventional stage etiquette — the flailing arms, the shuffling in a full circle to acknowledge applause — wins him sympathy. Regarded as the public comeback of the broken man whose harrowing experiences have moved thousands, his Festival Hall performance on Monday night — the first leg of his UK tour — was a heartwarming occasion.

Judged by purely musical criteria, it is another story. Clearly Helfgott is a pianist of considerable abilities — at least potentially — but he is as yet unable to realise his vision. In the first half of the programme he substituted for the advertised one, he offered some playing of great delicacy and moments of extraordinarily poetic insight, especially in Liszt's Concert Etude No 3 (*Un Sospiro*) and Mendelssohn's Andante and Rondo Capriccioso.

In Liszt's Second Ballade in B Minor, however, the idiosyncrasies began to play havoc with musical sense. Passages of extreme introversion were juxtaposed with cascades of double octaves dispatched with maximum velocity and force, but with no mediation between them.

What Helfgott's playing lacks at the moment is discipline, shape, and structure. Nowhere was this more evident than in Beethoven's *Appassionata Sonata*, occu-

pying the second half. Here note values and rhythms were distorted and phrases misshapen in a travesty of Beethovenian style. Beethoven may have been bursting out of classical constraints, but one has to be aware of the structure in order to appreciate his contravention. Helfgott's erratic lurching speaks eloquently for his condition, but tells us little about the music. One is left with the impression that he has interesting things to say, but lacks the means with which to say them. His attempts to communicate result in a flow of consciousness — the musical equivalent of the over-excited, barely intelligible mode of speech heard in the film.

Beside the Liszt works, where subjective expression allows more scope for idiosyncrasy, Helfgott is at his best in more showpieces such as the *Flight of the Bumble-Bee*. Where virtuosity reigns supreme. One wishes this complex musician good speed on his road to recovery; before long he will perhaps be delighting us with convincing accounts of Beethoven as well.

BARRY MILLINGTON



"David Helfgott appears to be thoroughly enjoying himself, giving the lie to the charge of exploitation voiced by some"

Bowing out on a new note

NEARING the end of his ten years as principal conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Libor Pešek is still expanding his repertoire. He might have overindulged in Czech music in the past, but on this occasion it was his priority to introduce a new work by Graham Fitkin and to present it within a context of Milhaud, Rodrigo and Rossini.

The Fitkin piece was originally announced as *Samba*. It has since acquired a new title, *Graf*, which refers to the tennis player Steffi Graf and in particular her forehead, ground strokes, the tension and momentum curve occurring during preparation and follow-through of a stroke, the ratio of forehead to backhand strokes over a given period. Pulling the other one, he has

RLPO/Pešek
Liverpool

written a kind of concertante part for a Latin-American percussion group — imperious in this first performance by ten members of Inner Sense from exotic Manchester — which only gradually eases into the kind of footwork associated with samba and related rhythms. It's colourful and entertaining stuff but, as yet another manifestation of a condescending policy for new music in the Philharmonic Hall, difficult to take.

It was also difficult to accept that there was any wisdom in moving Milhaud's *Saudades do Brasil* from the end to the beginning of the

Master of detail

RPO/Gatti
Albert Hall

WITH each of their concerts together, the Royal Philharmonic's good fortune at having secured Daniele Gatti as its music director becomes increasingly clear. Morale has improved and with it the orchestra's sound, and both seemed to be pushing towards the top of the scale on Sunday night at the Albert Hall in an excellently played programme of Mendelssohn and Mahler.

Gatti has become a conductor of considerable authority, and in an inspiring account of Mahler's Fifth Symphony he got everything he wanted from the orchestra. Each detail, each nuance was set in place: under a lesser conductor this performance might have sounded fussy, but Gatti,

working without a score, maintained the flow coherently. He has the big-hearted, romantic temperament needed for this music, but none of the excess that can imply, and all sections of the orchestra were kept firmly in check.

Incisive playing in the first movement set the mood. The opening trumpet solo, bright and crisp, gave way to the dark-coloured funeral march in which the emphasis was on beauty of tone. Inner turmoil was not disguised, but the music sounded less neurotic than it can, and all the surging nervous energy was saved for the second movement. The Austrian dances of the Scherzo took on a very genial lilt, the pizzicato episodes had special delicacy. The dreamy Adagio seemed to come out of nothingness, and Gatti only really whipped up his forces in response to Mahler's hard-won triumph at the symphony's majestic close.

In Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto the refined soloist was Shlomo Mintz, whose way of letting melodies simply unfold themselves in sweet-toned lines at the top and a nuttier sound down below makes him a natural in this repertoire. But Gatti also has interesting things to say about the composer who he is featuring this season. Here the playing was light and airy, and the conductor's Italianate instinct was to emphasise Mendelssohn's sunny melodiousness.

GERALD LARNER

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament
JULIE-ALANAH BRIGHTEN

Age: 25

Profession: Actress, girl next door, local hero (in her home town in North Devon)

Why is she famous? She won the female lead in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, which opens at the Dominion on Tuesday.

What are her credentials? After Guildford School of Acting and the National Youth Music Theatre, she led Gary Wilmot astray as Lady Jacqueline in a regional tour of *Me and My Girl* and made her West End debut in the chorus line of *Oliver!*

Why her? Blonde, blue-eyed, 5ft 6in. "Belle is a lot like me, stuck in a small town where she's thought of as odd because she doesn't conform. She's not like your regular Disney heroine. She doesn't go off to find a handsome prince."

Career sidelines: She fronted a rock band for four years, singing Cher and Madonna covers at hotels and parties on the Devon circuit. "We did go to St Tropez one year. Two of the guitarists went on to form Reef."

What's it like working with a *Beast* (aka Alasdair Harvey)? "He's lovely and frightening. But if I met him in a dark alley I'd run a million miles. Belle is a lot madder than me."

Is it hard being one of the only humans on stage? No — it's harder for everyone else. "It's incredibly restricting trying to express real human emotions when you're a dancing teapot."

Which actors have influenced you? "I admire Robert Lindsay and Julia Mackenzie because they are so adaptable. They can move from musicals to films to straight stage roles."

What happens after this? "I don't know whether to record an album or what. It might sound naive but I want to try everything, especially film. There's a huge buzz about the British film industry after *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Trainspotting* and *Mike Leigh*. I'd love to ride that wave."

Any wise words? "Stay true to yourself: it's the least complicated way of getting through life."

JAMES CHRISTOPHER



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Power to revoke order if child is protected

In re G (a Minor) (Adoption: Freeing order)

Before Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead, Lord Steyn and Lord Hoffmann [Speeches May 1]

The court had power under section 20 of the Adoption Act 1976 to revoke an order freeing a child for adoption even though the former parent could not be properly permitted to resume sole parental responsibility, provided that the child's welfare could be protected by making the revocation conditional on the obtaining of a care order under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 or in some other way.

The House of Lords so held in allowing an appeal by the mother of G from the order of the Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Balcombe, Lord Justice Aldous and Lord Justice Hutton) in *In re G (a Minor) (Adoption: Freeing order)* [1996] 2 F.L.R. 399, dismissing her appeal against the order of Judge Wilcock, QC, in *Barnstaple County Council v. G* [1996] 1 F.L.R. 1046, in which he had refused to revoke a freeing order in respect of G.

The child had been in local authority care and was freed for adoption in 1993. In the event, the prospective adopters decided not to proceed and he became a boarder at a special school experienced in dealing with severely emotionally disturbed children.

When 12 months had elapsed since the freeing order and no

adoption had been made, the local authority had been required by section 20(4) of the 1976 Act to notify the mother of the fact that the child was not being adopted.

The mother had then applied under section 20 to revoke the freeing order. While accepting that the child should stay at the special school she did not suggest that he should be made subject to a fresh care order. The judge had refused to revoke the freeing order but granted her limited access.

On the mother's appeal she agreed that if the freeing order were to be revoked the local authority should obtain a care order, but the Court of Appeal held that the revocation could not be made conditional on the obtaining of a care order and operated only so as to give the former parent sole and unfettered parental responsibility.

It was, in fact, refused to order revocation.

Mr Charles Bloom, QC and Miss Sarah Forster for the mother; Mr Michael Horowitz, QC and Miss Hayley Griffiths for the local authority; Mr James Hargrave, QC and Miss Kay Firth-Butterfield for the guardian ad litem.

LORD BROWNE-WILKINSON said that on the making of a care order under section 31, the parent did not lose all parental responsibility but shared it with the local authority. However, the authority had power to determine the extent to which the parent might meet that responsibility.

The effect of the freeing order

was that the parental responsibility which the mother had previously enjoyed was extinguished, the existing care order discharged and sole parental responsibility vested in the local authority as adoption agency.

A revocation under section 20 was discretionary and the court was bound to have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child. The effect of revocation was to vest sole parental responsibility in the parent but the care order was not automatically revived.

In consequence, the effect of a revocation under section 20 was that the full and unfettered parental responsibility would vest in the parent whether or not he or she was a suitable person to have such sole responsibility. If he was not a suitable person it could not be for the welfare of the child to make an order vesting sole responsibility in him.

Those factors had led the Court of Appeal to the conclusion that there was a lacuna in the 1976 Act in dealing with a child, subject to a freeing order, who subsequently became unlikely to become adopted but whose parent could not properly be permitted to resume sole and unfettered responsibility.

The Court of Appeal, although initially attracted to the proposal that the position could be covered by a care order, felt bound to reject that course as running counter to

the express purpose of section 20. His Lordship did not agree and emphasised the background against which section 20 had to be construed. The parent of a child enjoyed parental responsibility of some kind even where there was intervention under the 1989 Act and had certain statutory rights thereunder.

On the making of a freeing order all the ordinary rights of a parent and those statutory rights were extinguished. That was a necessary corollary to enable an adoption to take place.

But if the proposed adoption failed to proceed, the parent would not have any proposed adoption pending, it was hard to accept that Parliament could have intended that the parent should continue to be deprived of all these rights.

Section 20 did not postulate that the former parent must wish for sole and unfettered parental responsibility. Parental responsibility could be shared. Where a care order had been made, that responsibility was shared, but even so the former parent might still wish to resume parental responsibility, shared or limited, though it might be.

There was no lacuna in the Adoption Act. It operated alongside and as part of the general legislation regulating powers over children. There was no reason why the provisions of the Act had to be read as a self-sufficient code. The powers it conferred in relation to

adoption could, if necessary, be used in conjunction with and supplemented by the powers of the Children Act.

The position was as follows: Where a freeing order had been made but at the end of one year thereafter it was clear that no adoption was likely to take place within a short period, the freeing order might be revoked so as to restore the parent to his or her normal rights and to ensure that the child did not remain in an adoption limbo.

Even if the former parent was not, at the date of revocation, fit to have sole and unfettered responsibility, the court had jurisdiction to make the order provided that the welfare of the child could be protected by making the revocation conditional upon such consequential orders as were appropriate under the Children Act or under its inherent jurisdiction or in some other way.

In the present case, there was no justification for keeping the freeing order in force at a time when it was accepted that no adoption might ever take place. Revocation would take effect upon the making of a care order relating to the child under section 31 of the 1989 Act.

LORD LLOYD, Lord Nicholls, Lord Steyn and Lord Hoffmann agreed. Solicitors: Charlesworth Nicholls & Co. Creditors: Sharpe Pritchard for Mr K. Barry Morgan, Barnstaple; Slee Blackwell, Barnstaple.

Deciding when structure is part of land

Elitestone Ltd v Morris and Another

Before Lord Browne-Wilkinson, Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead and Lord Clyde [Speeches May 1]

Where the question to be determined was whether, when a structure was built, it became part and parcel of the land itself and was real property in its own right, the answer depended on the degree and the object of annexation to the land of the objects brought there. The degree of annexation varied from object to object. Therefore, the answer depended on the uses and purposes for which the structure was brought on the land and created and designed.

Where a house was built in a way that it could not be removed, except by destruction, it could not be intended to remain a chattel and had to be intended to form part of the realty.

The House of Lords so held allowing an appeal by the defendants, David Owen Morris and Judith Mary Skedd, from the Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Balcombe, Lord Justice Aldous and Lord Justice Hutton) in *Elitestone Ltd v Morris and Another* [1997] 1 F.L.R. 1046, in which they had sought to remove a structure from the land of Elitestone Ltd, a company owned by Mr Morris.

The structure was a building which had been built on the land of Elitestone Ltd, a company owned by Mr Morris, in 1957. The building was a two-story structure which had been built on the land of Elitestone Ltd, a company owned by Mr Morris, in 1957. The building was a two-story structure which had been built on the land of Elitestone Ltd, a company owned by Mr Morris, in 1957.

on their land, out of which five sections were selected for trial. Mr Morris pleaded that he was a tenant from year to year, that he occupied the premises as his residence and that he was entitled to the protection of section 1 of the Rent Act 1977. The assistant recorder made that order, declaring that Mr Morris was a statutory tenant of Unit 6.

The parties accepted that if the building was a chattel, the premises held by Mr Morris did not include the building but comprised the site only and that his tenure was not a tenancy within section 1 of the 1977 Act. But if the building was a fixture Mr Morris held a protected tenancy under the Act.

Section 1 of the 1977 Act provides: "... a tenancy under which a dwelling-house ... is let as a separate dwelling is a protected tenancy for the purposes of the Act."

Mr Paul Morgan, QC and Mr Stephen Cottle for the plaintiffs; Mr James Thom for the plaintiffs. LORD LLOYD said that the plaintiffs were the freehold owners of Unit 6, Murton, Swansea. The land was divided into 21 lots. Mr Morris was the occupier of a bungalow on lot No 6. It was built before 1945. Mr Morris had lived there since 1971.

The plaintiffs acquired the freehold in 1989 with a view to redevelopment. On April 30, 1991 they issued proceedings in Swansea County Court claiming possession against all 21 occupiers.

There were several issues before the assistant recorder and the Court of Appeal but the sole remaining issue before the House of Lords was whether Mr Morris's bungalow did become part of the land or whether it had remained a chattel ever since it was first

constructed before 1945. The materials out of which the bungalow was constructed, that is, the timber frame walls, the feather boarding, the suspended timber floors, the claspboard ceilings, were all changed when they were brought on to the site. Did they cease to be chattels when they were built into the composite structure?

The answer to that question, as Mr Justice Balcombe had pointed out in *Holland v Hodgson* (1872) LR 7 CP 328, depended on the circumstances of each case, but mainly on two factors, the degree of annexation to the land and the object of the annexation. The importance of the degree of annexation varied from object to object. In the case of a large object, such as a house, the question did not often arise. Annexation went without saying.

However, where a house was constructed in such a way that it was removable, whether as a unit or in sections it might remain a chattel, even though it was connected temporarily to main services such as water and electricity. But a house which was constructed in such a way that it could not be removed at all, save by destruction, could not be intended to remain as a chattel. It must have been intended to form part of the realty.

There was, therefore, no doubt that when Mr Morris's bungalow was built and as each of the timber frame walls were placed in position, they all became part of the structure which was itself part and parcel of the land.

LORD BROWNE-WILKINSON, Lord Nicholls, Lord Steyn and Lord Clyde delivered a concurring opinion.

Solicitors: Smith Llewellyn Partnership, Swansea; T. G. Jones & Associates, Swansea.

Disclosure necessary for bringing proceedings

P v T Ltd

Before Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor [Judgment April 30]

Where justice could not otherwise be done, a plaintiff could obtain an order for discovery against a defendant in order to use its fruits in bringing proceedings against a third party even though it could not, without the information sought, be ascertained whether the third party had indeed committed a tort against the plaintiff.

Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor, so held in the Chancery Division on a notice of motion issued by the plaintiff seeking an order that the defendant, his former employer, disclose precise details of allegations made against him which formed the basis for his dismissal and the identity of the complainant who made the allegations and that he be at liberty to use the documents and information so provided in an action against the defendant.

Mr Patrick Elias, QC, for the plaintiff, Mr Witold Pawlak for the defendant.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR said the plaintiff had been the operations manager of the defendant company and was employed in put out to tender major con-

tracts. His employment involved considerable responsibility and his status was fairly senior.

At the end of May 1996 the managing director of the company told the plaintiff that a third party had made allegations against him of a serious nature. When the plaintiff asked for details of the allegations the managing director refused to specify their nature or the identity of the informant.

The plaintiff's contract of employment contained terms requiring certain disciplinary proceedings to be followed. At a hearing he was brought against one party solely to obtain discovery of documents to enable the plaintiff to bring an action against another person. But there were limits to the jurisdiction.

In that case, Lord Reid had said (at p 474) that a person might know that a particular person is in possession of a libellous letter which he has good reason to believe defames him but the author of which he cannot discover. I am satisfied that it would not be proper to order discovery in order that the person who has suffered damage might be able to find and sue the wrongdoer. Neither authority, principle nor public policy would justify that.

He then referred to the existing authorities and continued (at p 475):

"They seem to me to point to a very reasonable principle that if through no fault of his own a person gets mixed up in the various acts of others so as to facilitate their wrongdoing he may incur no personal liability but he comes under a duty to assist the person who has been wronged by giving him full information and disclosing the identity of the wrongdoers."

"I am more inclined to reach this result because it is clear that if the person mixed up in the affair has to any extent incurred any liability to the person wronged, he must make full disclosure even though the person wronged has no intention of proceeding against him."

"It would I think be quite illogical to make his obligation to disclose the identity of the real offenders depend on whether or not he has himself incurred some minor liability."

His Lordship had to decide whether he should exercise his discretion so as to allow discovery so that the plaintiff could bring proceedings against the third party in order to clear his name.

The appropriate course would be an action in defamation or malicious falsehood. But it was not possible, given the present state of

evidence, for the plaintiff to know whether he had a viable case of action. He had to know what it was he said to have done.

In that respect he was in a different position from the plaintiff in *Norwich Pharmacal* where it could be said with certainty that tortious infringements of his patent right were being committed by a third party.

Here the plaintiff had to discover whether a tort had been committed against him; whether, for instance the statements made were untrue and made with malice.

The purpose of any court order was to enable justice to be done. His Lordship said that the present case demanded that the plaintiff should be put in a position to clear his name.

It was intolerable that he should continue to be stained by the allegation unless he could obtain assistance through an order for discovery.

Accordingly, although *Norwich Pharmacal* had not as yet been applied to a situation in which the tort by a third party against the plaintiff had not yet clearly been made out, his Lordship would grant the relief sought by the notice of motion.

Solicitors: Merriam White; Hart Brown, Guildford.

Allocating prejudice

Hunter v Skingley and Another

Before Lord Justice Hirst and Lord Justice Phillips [Judgment April 25]

In a case where there was substantial initial delay for which the defendant was entirely responsible, followed by delays for which the plaintiff was responsible, it was appropriate for the judge to allocate prejudice.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, Susan Hunter, against a decision of District Judge, BQC, in the Mayor's and City of London Court on September 16, 1996 allowing an appeal by the first defendant, Victor Skingley, against the district judge's refusal to dismiss the

plaintiff's case for want of prosecution.

Mr Robert Bailey-King for the plaintiff; Mr Marc Rivaland for the defendant.

LORD JUSTICE HIRST said the action arose from building work carried out by the defendant for the plaintiff between February and April 1987.

The plaintiff had issued a writ claiming damages for breach of contract, and in May 1988 had obtained default judgment against the defendant.

The defendant had been entirely responsible for delays up to 1993, but thereafter there had been delays for which the plaintiff was responsible.

His Lordship distinguished the

instant case from *Rosebank v Murgatroyd* [1994] 2 A.C. 226 in which Lord Browne-Wilkinson had regarded it as artificial and unsatisfactory to allocate to one rather than another period of time prejudice arising from defaulting witnesses' memory.

In the circumstances it was not artificial to allocate prejudice and the judge had erred in not doing so.

Solicitors: Howard Stone; Hewson & Hunter, Kirkby Stephen.

Correction

In *Victor Skingley v Susan Hunter*, the plaintiff's solicitor was Victor Skingley, not Susan Hunter, as stated in the article on page 36.

Decision to use house to pay for care valid

Regina v Somerset County Council, Ex parte Harcombe

Before Mr Justice Forbes [Judgment April 28]

Part of the purpose of the National Assistance Act 1948 was that those able to pay for accommodation provided under the Act should do so.

A local authority's discretion under paragraph 18 of Schedule 4 to the National Assistance (Assessment of Resources) Regulations (SI 1992 No 3977) was a broad discretion which the courts would be slow to interfere with where all

material considerations had been taken into account.

Mr Justice Forbes so held in the Queen's Bench Division when dismissing the application of Faith Gertrude Harcombe, by her son and next friend, David Harcombe, for judicial review by way of certiorari to quash the decision of Somerset County Council, December 30, 1996 to take account of the value of her house in calculating how much she was to contribute towards the state provision of accommodation in a nursing home.

"Rule 21 of the 1992 Regulations provides: 'The capital of a resident to be taken into account shall be the whole of his capital calculated in accordance with this part 2.'"

"Paragraph 18 of Schedule 4 provides: 'The value of any premises occupied in whole or in part by a third party where the local authority is authorised to disregard the value of the premises.'"

Mr Gregory Jones for the applicant; Mr Nigel Griffin for the council.

The local authority had exercised its power under sections 22 and 23 of the 1948 Act to obtain a charge on Mrs Harcombe's house, suspending enforcement by sale while her son lived in it.

Rule 21 of the 1992 Regulations provides: "The capital of a resident to be taken into account shall be the whole of his capital calculated in accordance with this part 2."

"Paragraph 18 of Schedule 4 provides: 'The value of any premises occupied in whole or in part by a third party where the local authority is authorised to disregard the value of the premises.'"

Mr Gregory Jones for the applicant; Mr Nigel Griffin for the council.

local authority.

MR JUSTICE FORBES said that an important underlying principle of the legislative scheme was that those who needed to be provided with accommodation pursuant to the provisions of Part III of the 1948 Act should pay for such accommodation if able to do so rather than that it should be provided at public expense.

The discretion in paragraph 18 of Schedule 4 was expressed in wide and general terms. The court should be slow to interfere with a local authority's exercise of such a wide discretion where it was clear, as in the instant case, that careful consideration had been given to all material circumstances relevant to the proper exercise of that discretion.

Solicitors: Pankins, Bridgewater; Mr John Whitcut, Townton.

Fall claim fails

Chaudhary v British Airways plc

A passenger suffering from a pre-existing paralysis to the left side of his body and was injured when he fell as he tried to leave his seat, and did not sustain an injury, notwithstanding the carrier liable under article 17 of the Warsaw Convention.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Tugendhat, Lord Justice Thorpe and Lord Justice Mummery) held that the plaintiff was not entitled to an award of damages for the alleged negligence of British Airways plc on November 22, 1995, in Willesden County Court had struck out his claim as disclosing no reasonable cause of action.

LORD JUSTICE TUGENDHAT said that the word "accident" focused on the cause and not the

effect. It was to be contrasted with "consequence" in article 18.

Because the Convention was an international treaty, it had to be construed purposively. *Sidhu v British Airways plc* [1997] 1 F.L.R. 1046, [1997] 2 W.L.R. 20, 40, 41. In *McFarlane v British Airways plc* [1997] 1 F.L.R. 1046, [1997] 2 W.L.R. 20, 40, 41. In *McFarlane v British Airways plc* [1997] 1 F.L.R. 1046, [1997] 2 W.L.R. 20, 40, 41. In *McFarlane v British Airways plc* [1997] 1 F.L.R. 1046, [1997] 2 W.L.R. 20, 40, 41.

The word "accident" was not to be construed by reference to the 1948 Act, but by reference to the normal operation of the aircraft. The plaintiff in the instant case fell because of his pre-existing medical condition.

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LONDON PROPERTY

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CITY LETS (HONG KONG) LIMITED

City Lets (London) Limited and City Lets (Hong Kong) Limited (together "City Lets"), wish it to be known that:-

- On 3.4.1997, Proceedings in the High Court of Justice, (Action No. 1997 C No. 694) were issued by City Lets against William Patrick Delaney ("Delaney") and London and Orient Properties Limited ("London and Orient"), both operating/trading from 4 Portman Mews South, London W1H 9AU.
- On 3.4.1997, the Court granted an Order restraining Delaney and London and Orient respectively, inter alia, from disclosing or making use of confidential information belonging to City Lets and disclosing or making use of the names and addresses of City Lets' client landlords. Further, Delaney and London and Orient were each restrained from contacting or entering into contracts with City Lets' client landlords as appeared in the records of City Lets.
- On 10.4.1997, it was ordered, inter alia, by consent, that:-
 - Subject to certain named exceptions, Delaney be restrained, up to and including 10.4.1998 from disclosing or making use of confidential information acquired during the course of his employment with City Lets (or acquired from others so employed), including, inter alia, the names and addresses of the client landlords of City Lets;
 - Subject to certain named exceptions, London and Orient be restrained until 10.4.1998 from disclosing or making use of the names and addresses of the client landlords of City Lets;
 - Subject to certain exceptions, until 10.4.1998, both Delaney and London and Orient be restrained from soliciting, (other than by public advertisement), the business of managing properties on behalf of, or entering into contracts with, the client landlords of City Lets, whose names appear in the records of City Lets.

S. Dhown
Managing Director
City Lets (London) Limited
City Lets (Hong Kong) Limited

NORTH OF THE THAMES

BAKER STREET, Chalfont St Giles, 3 bed semi, 2 bath, 1950s, £125,000. 0171 724 9149

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An arsenal of new weapons is available to curb noisy neighbours, says Eve-Ann Prentice

The quiet revolution

What is music to the ears for some people can be torture for the neighbours. Be it *Aida* or acid house, the hi-fi sounds that thrill one person are invariably hell heard second-hand from next door.

Local authorities are preparing to use an array of new powers to curb noisy and abusive neighbours, including surveillance, secret tape-recordings and the seizure of musical equipment. Councils were recently given muscle after the passing of two laws, the 1996 Housing Act, and the Noise Act, which became law in April.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, which administers one of the densest inner-city areas in the country, with 45,000 tenants and leaseholders, is to introduce a seven-night noise service from August. The council has also announced it is ready to take stronger measures against racial harassment and out-of-control children.

It is not just council tenants who can be neighbours from hell. Marc Rankin, Tower Hamlets environmental health officer, says: "You are just as likely to get noise from people who live in expensive private homes."

The council has agreed to adopt the Noise Act, giving itself the power to serve warning notices that any disturbance should be stopped within ten minutes; to issue fixed penalty notices, which can lead to a £100 fine for anyone who ignores the initial warning; and to prosecute those who commit a new nighttime noise offence. The fine can be up to £1,000.

A weapon in the war on noise is a sealed, tamper-proof black box containing a sound-level recorder, which is left in the homes of people who say they are victims of noisy neighbours. This is especially useful in cases where the noise is never apparent when council officials or the police arrive to investigate. Mr Rankin says: "The box, which costs £7,000 to £8,000, is usually left in the home for three or four days. There is a queue waiting to use it at the moment."

The problem with the box is that though it records noise levels, it cannot detect the type or origins of the nuisance.

"The box could be recording a noisy lift, for instance," Mr Rankin says. "There is no substitute for a witness... someone who has actually heard *Bat Out of Hell* being

played in the middle of the night." If all else fails, environmental health officers also have the power to seize amplifiers and other sound equipment. "We can get a permit from a magistrate to seize the equipment but this is a final course of action," Mr Rankin says. "When I was working for another council, we seized an entire bus that was being used for rave parties."

The new Tower Hamlets noise service will operate from 11pm until 7am, replacing a service that runs from Sundays to Thursdays, 9pm to 1.30am, and on Fridays and Saturdays 10.30pm to 1.30am.

John Biggs, the Planning and Environmental Services committee's chairman, says: "Tower Hamlets will be one of the first councils to adopt the Act. If people ignore us, they can expect action."

It is not just noise that can make residents' lives hell. Evert Rowbotham, a racial harassment lawyer working for Tower Hamlets, believes that racist abuse has become subtler and harder to detect in the past two years. He says: "Racial harassment cases used to come in thick and fast and the people we were dealing with were acting in full view; witnesses were easy to find. Now we have to use more surveillance to identify the perpetrators."

The council employs professional witnesses whose job is to gather evidence of harassment and give evidence in court. It owns its own surveillance equipment. "Some of the more expensive equipment that we have to hire, such as a camera," Mr Rowbotham adds, "fits into a button-hole."

Under the 1996 Housing Act, hearsay evidence can be used against tenants guilty of noisy, criminal or anti-social behaviour. The council is introducing a package of measures, including a new mediation service, closer co-operation with the police, including joint visits to culprits' homes, and steps to speed up legal action.

The Act also provides for an "introductory tenancy scheme", which gives councils a fast-track route to evict troublesome new tenants. Tower Hamlets has, however, decided not to implement this part of the Act for now, saying that some of the most serious anti-social behaviour comes from the children of tenants and their friends.



Marc Rankin, Tower Hamlets environmental health officer. "There is no substitute for a witness"

Would you pay to lord it up?

If you have the money, you could buy your way into the unlanded gentry

Possibly the largest ever auction of lordships and baronies will be held by the agent Strutt & Parker later next week, and there are titles for all takers. Amanda Loose writes. One particular lordship has caught the eyes of many: the lordship of Brighton Lewes because Chris Eubank is believed to be a possible bidder. The flamboyant gentleman-boxer paid £45,000 last year for the right to style himself Lord of Brighton. The Brighton Lewes title was once held at one time by Hamelin, son of Geoffrey of Anjou.

Three baronies and 33 lordships of the manor will be offered for sale at the Ironmongers Hall in the City, and many are among the 13,418 manorial lordships listed in the Domesday Book. Baronies can go for up to £100,000, but a lordship could be yours for a more modest £6,000 or so.

The lordship of Blisland, Cornwall, once owned by Robert, Count of Mortain, the biggest landowner in Norman England, and also by the Molesworth family, is for sale, as are five titles held by Earl Spencer, including the lordship of Battersea, which is attracting much interest.

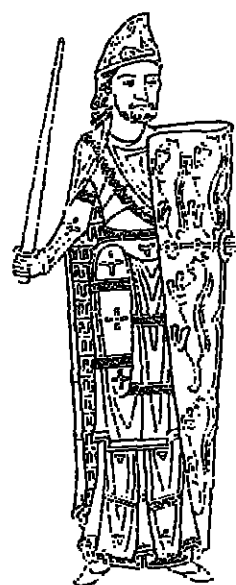
The Earl of Chichester is offering the lordship of Ripe in East Sussex. Historically, baronies and lordships conferred a title, lands and specific rights to the holder and were the monarch's way of rewarding loyal subjects. Holders were allowed to set up galleys in their villages, raise private armies, claim local ship wrecks and to collect a herring rent from their tenants — fish in lieu of money.

Now, says Richard Wooliams of Strutt & Parker, the titles, most of them held by the Royal Family, the Church Commissioners and the Dukes of Devonshire and Northumberland, confer few rights. He explains that people are selling because the titles have no real meaning. "Often," he adds, "their families have sold the estate to which the title refers and have bought another. None of the titles we are selling comes with the lands to which they refer. Holders are merely entitled to call themselves Lord of

wherever and to print the title on their passport, cheques and headed notepaper. New holders can apply for their own coat of arms, including their family name."

Despite the lack of perks, there are, according to Mr Wooliams, usually many takers. "About 30 per cent of bidders are from abroad — usually Americans after a piece of English history," he says. Many see it as a step up the social ladder. Businessmen and industrialists often buy titles as a pat on the back for themselves and use the name on letterheads."

Ironmongers Hall, Barbican, London EC2, May 15, 2.30pm. Brochures from Strutt & Parker (01245-283201)



Geoffrey of Anjou, above, and the Molesworth family crest



Address the issue fully

Property values can depend on the address, says Amanda Loose

After a court battle fraught with claims of snobbery, parish councillors, developers and residents in Beetley, near Dereham, Norfolk, thought they had finally cracked it.

The long-running battle over what to call the village's newest housing development — a cul-de-sac of ten houses — appeared to have been resolved a few weeks ago with the name "The Paddocks". But the Royal Mail pointed out that there was already a house called The Paddock, otherwise known as 4 Elmham Road, almost opposite the development. The solution: call the development The Paddocks but have no No 4.

The developer John Hilditch and Ray Knightley, who bought the first house on the development before a name was decided, wanted it to be called Elmham Court. But the parish council wanted to name



A property in Belgavia, an area that can attract offers running to several million pounds

it Bryan Barnard Close after a veteran local councillor and former railwayman.

Elmham Court's association with the nearby desirable Elmham Road undoubtedly would have held a certain cachet, a factor that cannot be underestimated, as many an estate agent knows.

Rupert Bradstock of Proper-

ty Vision, a buying agency, says: "Every county is like the curate's egg when it comes to smart addresses: good in parts. But certain places are a cut above the rest."

Colin Mackenzie, of Hamptons, reckons the best country address is the Old Rectory, and that in the complicated county leagues East Sussex comes above West Kent, but below East Kent.

Even estate agents get caught out. Ian Homersham of John D. Wood was at first baffled to learn that the SN1 postcode of his new home in Colshill, Oxfordshire, stood for Swindon.

John Gibson, of Savills in Chelmsford, has watched many clients wrestle with the complexities of the Suffolk-Essex Question, which one buyer solved by changing their address to "Suffolk (postal address Essex)". Mr Gibson says: "Some houses in Suffolk have a Colchester, Essex postal address, while some Essex houses have Suffolk addresses, and it can cause much consternation. One buyer would not move to East Bergholt, which has an Essex address, even though it's in Suffolk, because he did not want his daughter to be an Essex girl."

Agents have many a tale of budding Hyacinth Buckets prepared to pay well over the odds for the right address. Anthony Lassman sold an Eaton Square flat on a short

lease for about £9 million four years ago, to clients who felt they simply had to have it.

Tom Dennes, of Chestertons Residential, knows the cost of the right Mayfair address can be high. "Grosvenor Square is one of London's most expensive addresses," he says. "Properties can sell for as much as 40 per cent higher than their close neighbours."

A few hundred yards of difference in other areas of central London, says Simon Umfreville of De Groot Collis in Knightsbridge. "A reasonable-sized house in West Chelsea, SW10, will normally fetch between £700,000 and £800,000," he says. "The same house in Fulham will go for some £200,000 less."

Andrew Rome, of Knight Frank in Beaconsfield, says that people will pay over the odds for the right house with the address, even outside the capital. He adds: "Buyers may be willing to compromise on the house, but they certainly won't compromise on the address. Last year we sold a two-up, two-down cottage in Hambleden village for just over £200,000, which we were quite pleased with, while a new bungalow there sold for almost £350,000."

Sheila Hodgkinson, of Chutons in Oxford, says people will pay premiums of between 25 and 50 per cent to live in Henley.

AN EXCLUSIVE READER OFFER

THE TIMES

Get a free child ticket for Rock Circus



The Times, in association with Rock Circus, offers readers the chance to get a free child ticket to the venue where 100 years of rock and pop history is on display. On a revolving stage there is a £500,000 production illustrating the birth of a strand of music which communities across America tried to ban because its "evil rhythms" would infect the youth of the day. The show is enhanced by a sound system with a bank

of 24 speakers and £100,000 of computer-controlled lighting. Audio-animatic moving and static wax figures, lasers, authentic memorabilia, videos and archive film and personal stereo surround you for a unique rock and pop experience. There is also a "wall of hands" including those of Gloria Estefan, Eric Clapton and Boyzone, for fans to place their own hands into.

HOW TO APPLY

Take the voucher which will be published in *The Times* tomorrow plus two tokens to Rock Circus, Piccadilly, London. When you purchase one full-paying adult ticket, you will be admitted with one child at no extra charge. (A child is 16 and under.) This offer is valid until May 31, 1997. For opening times, please call 0171-734 7203. Tickets are: adult £7.95, child £6.50.



CHANGING TIMES

ANZ

Base Rate

Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited announces that its base rate has changed from 6% to 6.25% p.a. with effect from close of business on 6th May, 1997.

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TELEVISION CHOICE

A welcome return to arms

In the matter of designing and building golf courses in

many parts of Britain, I am unconvinced that bigger is better. Why on such courses are there so many bunkers and why are so many so big? Why are inland courses built to include characteristics normally associated with seaside courses? Water is needed for

In Florida, where the water table is only a few feet below the surface, to move earth is to reveal water. At The Oxfordshire, however, as at other

Why should golf courses in Britain resemble those in Florida? Is it forgotten that the challenges posed by 25 strategically placed bunkers can be as great as by 75, that some water hazards are acceptable but that water on too many holes becomes tedious and time-wasting? The Oxfordshire and its ilk sit in Britain as sympathetically as Canton would in southern California.

The Peninsular Wars against Napoleon may be over, but Richard Sharpe (Sean Bean) has some odd scores to settle and settle them he does — losing one wife and gaining another along the way. This new series will bring the Bernard Cornwell stories as close — clanking with the Battle of Waterloo. Meaning our gallanting major has been framed for a long time, and he's got to crush up Ducos and stashed accused of stealing Napoleon's treasures. He is court martialled, makes a break for it and tracks the missing treasure (and Ducos) as far as Naples. There are only so many variations on the theme of armies in fancy dress surging up hill and down, and this is a shameless stab at it. This is still smelly stuff — nothing quite like it outside the movies.

Trying to sell your par — or at least impress new buyers — then rethink your front hall. Anne Maurice, the American designer, breezes around one rather dirgy hall that ends up looking twice as bright and wide with a diagonally patterned floor and dozens of mirrors. "And you know," she says in English, "why do you keep your trash outside your house?" — quick as a flash, Ms Maurice lines up "sparkling new aluminum dustbins, filling them with floor mats. I don't want to see the dustmen cart that lot away! But perhaps the most useful advice tonight is how to make the most of your space when you live and work at home. Anne McKevitt, a designer, hauls one harried computer expert (a working mother) out of her clutter of boxes and files and redesigns her life and space — very cheaply — in just one day.

Sean Bean as Sharpe (TTV, 8.00pm)

about, most listened to comedy on radio. The imitators were legion—Prince Charles sank deep into his own Goon inspired fantasies. The writer/producer John Fisher has unearthed a most extraordinary film of him being accompanied by an extraordinary troupe of comedians past and present who are unearthing their praise and criticism of him. Denis Norden: "It is comedy they should teach in schools." Spike, who wrote virtually all the *Goon Shows* ("It nearly killed me") also supplies drawings of the characters, many animated to match their voices.

Yesterday, with the publication of an alarming report commissioned by the DoE. It highlights the plight of song birds — for example, the number of song thrushes is down by 73 per cent, skylarks by 38 per cent — and points to agricultural practices and the use of pesticides as the principal causes. It also points to the loss of Britain's wildlife. It can be argued that the agro-chemical industries are producing cheaper, more plentiful food for the nation, but is there not some way we can still enjoy these benefits and conserve our cherished landscapes and wildlife? Gavin Hewitt, a journalist investigating the facts behind the figures, says: "The cultural landscape we have to avert (or can we?) the tragic prospect of a countryside bereft of its natural sounds of spring."

Elizabeth Cowley

By Phil Yates

MARY ROBINSON, the President of the Irish Republic, may not be a smoocher aficionado, but she echoed the sentiments of the vast majority who are by describing Ken Doherty as "a fine ambassador" for what he brought to the European world championship. She was referring specifically to the role Doherty will undertake for his country, but the easy-going, personable Dubliner, who defied ante-post odds of 25-1 to lift the trophy, is sure to be of equal benefit for the game itself.

Doherty, 27, is a clean-living, dedicated but far from one-dimensional individual. He is a keen golfer with a passion, like so many of his countrymen, for Manchester United. He will, therefore,

make an immediate impact as a professional, he eventually enjoyed a significant breakthrough by prevailing at the 1993 Regal Welsh Open and also won the Scottish Masters, a prominent invitation event, in 1993 and 1994. Last season, he won the Dr Martens European League.

Doherty is undoubtedly an unexpected champion, but, by beating Stephen Hendry, he did not cause an upset equal to that of Joe Johnson's victory over Steve Davis in the 1987 final. After all, Doherty is one of only ten players to compile over 100 century breaks in competition, and, assisted by the £210,000 first prize, he has climbed to ninth in the all-time money-list, with total tournament earnings of £1,152,470.

With not an enemy on the circuit and with such an unassuming disposition, Doherty cannot fail to be a popular champion. The next question is whether he will be a successful one.

"I am certainly not going to rest on my laurels," Doherty said yesterday in the wake of his 18-2 victory over Hendry at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. "This result is certain to give me a lot of confidence and make me believe in myself. Mind you, it also means that my opponents will want to beat me more from now on. That comes with the territory."

take enormous pride in showing the spoils of victory to the Old Trafford faithful before United's closing FA Carling Premiership match of the season against West Ham United on Sunday.

The scar on Doherty's left cheek hints at a chequered youth, but that could not be farther from the truth. In fact, the injury was sustained when, as a child, Doherty fell off a roof on to the rim of an oil drum.

Doherty captured the first of his two Irish amateur titles at 16, won the world junior championship in Iceland in June 1989 and, five months later, travelled to Singapore, where he became the first Irish winner of the world amateur championship.

Although Doherty did not

fatigue during the final, he

Doherty concentrates on the task in hand on his way to victory in Sheffield

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 14

HOUNGAN
(c) A priest of the Voodoo cult. The native name in Haiti. Graham Greene, *Comedians*, 1966: "A zombie who has left his grave at the command of an houn gan."

KITAB
(c) The Koran. Also a sacred book of certain other revealed religions, eg. the Bible. From the Arabic for writing, a book. "Koran, the Holy Book of Islam, frequently spoken of by Moslems simply as the Book (*al-kitāb*)."

NANDI
(c) In Hindu mythology, the name of the bull of Siva which is his vahana or vehicle, and symbolizes fertility. Also a figure or statue of Nandi. "The majestic Nandi, the conventional vehicle of the lord Siva in front of the sanctum in the forecourt."

NOZZER
(c) A new recruit, a novice sailor. Perhaps a colloquial representation of "No, Sir". But, "Nozzer, new entry boy at the training establishment, HMS Ganges. These boys have been called nozzers since the establishment opened, because the petty officer in charge was nicknamed 'Nosey'."

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RUGBY LEAGUE

Lydon to assess candidates

THE Rugby Football League has put the appointment of a new Great Britain coach on hold. Joe Lydon, the former Wigan and Great Britain centre, who has been given the task of drawing up a shortlist, wants to see the candidates at work during the world club championship before making his decision.

begin to pit their skills against their Australasian counterparts when St Helens kick off the inaugural global tournament against the Auckland Warriors at Knowsley Road on June 6.

Lydon, who was appointed as the game's first technical director two months ago, said: "I envisage coming up with

July, with an appointment

Tommy Martyn, of St Helens, has been cleared of making a dangerous tackle on Abi Ekoku, of Bradford, during the Silk Cut Challenge Cup

final. Martyn, who scored two tries in the final, will be available for the Super League match against

Our May Issue's Full Of Delicious Tips

Great Bank Holiday menus, classic Normandy dishes and irresistible golden-topped gratins are just some of over 80 mouth-watering recipes in our May issue.

On Air
We follow Sophie Grigson's new series, *Taste of the Times*; we've the start of *MasterChef 1997*; and we've a guide to your favourite food programmes.

Good Food And Doing Adult
Part Two of our wine course has more grape varieties and how to spot faults. And we steer you through food scares and conflicting advice on children's food.

You'll find an 8-page guide to the food in New York; a chance to discover Archen; and more of the

BBC GOOD FOOD MAGAZINE ON SALE NOW

A story of prejudice, prying and prurience

As a film, *The Investigator* (Channel 4) isn't half bad — decent script, quality cast and one or two moments of lesbian sex, the latter at least guaranteeing male bums on seats. So, no problems there. Where there was a problem was with *The Investigator* as a true story.

I mean, if you were a lesbian soldier would you really want to spend much of your 12-year career with the Royal Military Police tracking down other lesbians and chucking them out of the Army? Wouldn't you go out and find another game of soldiers sharpish? Or do you think, hang on, I might get a film script out of this, I'll just sign up for another couple of years? Anyway, for one unlikely reason or another, Caroline Meagher stayed put.

Meagher was played by the distinctly unimpressive Helen Baxendale, which, when they draw up the nominations for most cynical

casting decision of the year, will surely not go unrewarded. Baxendale, for anybody who has been asleep for the past couple of years, is not only one of the most talented actresses around, she's also one of the sexiest in that it shouldn't work-but-it-does sort of way. Stick her in a film with a post-hoc shower scene and a lesbian initiation straight out of a David Hamilton skin-flick (I knew I'd heard the music somewhere before) and basically, you make an awful lot of men very happy.

The producers could argue that casting Baxendale (and a bevy of attractive actresses to play her girlfriends) actually echoed an important theme in the drama: obsessive male interest in what gay women get up to in private. When Meagher and her male colleagues tracked down one lesbian, Meagher was appalled (privately, of course, she had a crush on the girl) that the interrogation didn't

stop with an admission of guilt. Her salivating colleagues wanted details and lots of them. But if the casting mattered to male fantasy, Barbara Machin's well balanced script did not, cleverly addressing both Meagher's story and the wider issues. Sure, it made the Ministry of Defence's attitude to homosexuality look obsessive and vindictive, but it also pointed out that at least the Army's officially sanctioned prejudice was honest, unlike that encountered in other walks of life.

Only in the last 20 minutes did proceedings drag a little. By this stage, short of wearing a large sign saying "lesbian", it is difficult to know what Meagher could have done to make her orientation more conspicuous. In the end — and this would be a bit of a give-away — she ran her fingers through the blonde locks of Major Lang while dancing with



Matthew Bond

her in the mess. Her flatmate (perhaps significantly, just about the only plain woman we saw all night) did shopped her.

When it comes to shopping people, however, nobody does it better than Roger Cook who returned with a new series of *The Cook Report* (ITV). Whether you like or loathe this self-appointed television crusader, you have to admire his front. That's partly

because he is now so big you can't see round to the side, but also because he has the nerve of a belligerent bull elephant.

"There something you should know," he said, calmly enjoying a light snack with two Spaniards who had just arranged for him to go on a gorilla hunt in exchange for unrepentant thousands of dollars. "I'm a television reporter..." After a few nonplussed shrugs and a brief exchange in Spanish ("Who are these Roger Cook?" "Never end of it") they departed in traditional style, pursued by a wobbly video camera. On this occasion, however, it seemed that the game hunters might actually have the last laugh. Cook, you see, had turned his dossier of wrong-doings over to that well-known bastion of animal rights, the Spanish authorities. They will be hearing from them soon," he said with utter confidence. Probably to organise a gorilla fight. Ole.

Cook's investigation into big game hunting seemed on more certain and shocking ground in South Africa, where he exposed the cruelty of "canned hunts", which involve big cats such as lions and even imported tigers being shot — not in the wild but in fenced enclosures of a couple of hundred acres. "It's like shooting fish in a barrel," explained one former employee, appalled by discovering that the lions were reared for

But the owners of these camps also lure wild lions from the Kruger National Park into their enclosures. And it was just as he had one of these in his sights that Cook — posing very convincingly as a rich, untalented trophy hunter — pulled off one of his greatest Roger Cook moments. As his armed guide whispered advice, Cook suddenly opted for full volume. "Let me tell you why I'm not going to

shoot that lion. Because he doesn't stand a chance. I'm a television reporter..." You know the rest: rows, road-blocks and a dossier handed to the South African High Commission in London. They promised to do something about it.

Nobody, I suspect, will do anything about *Touching Evil* (ITV), the first story of which concluded last night. No matter that the plot made only the barest sense. No matter that some of the nonsense ("Kessler was worth billions — if Hinks goes down their name goes with it"). No matter that Cyril, the overweight psychic, turned out to be surplus baggage after a few minutes of *X-Files*-esque subplot.

For, despite all these deficiencies and a weak cop-out of an ending, *Touching Evil* worked very well, another triumph of style and Robson Green over substance. Bit depressing, really.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (25736)
7.00am Breakfast News (20194)
9.00am Breakfast News Extra (331216)
9.20am Style Challenge (6702533)
9.45am Kilroy (7057281)
10.30am Can't Knock, Won't Knock (85194)
11.00am News (7808026)
11.05am The Great Escape (7285026)
11.35am Change That (7387200)
12.00am News (7843337)
12.05pm Call My Bluff (7483633)
12.35pm Good Living: Presented by Jane Asher (9837303)

1.00am News (7) and weather (22281)
1.30am Regional News (86921216)
1.40am The Weather Show (9910303)
1.45am Neighbours (7) (40010945)
2.10am Outrage (6788007)
2.55am Through the Keyhole (6445200)
3.20am A Perfect Arrangement (6585871)
3.30am Playdays (3005571) 3.50am Monster Cafe (6584565) 4.05am New Top Gear Show (5788131) 4.10am Top Gear (4262575)
4.35am Out of Tune (1410571) 5.10am Newsround (7) (4741303) 5.10am Blue Peter (7) (6527129)

5.35am Neighbours (7) (772858)
6.00am News (7) and weather (113)
6.30am Regional News (465)
7.00am Antiques Roadshow: Hugh Scully presents highlights from past shows, this week focusing on a Louis XV painting unearthed in Guldord in 1989 (7) (8113)
7.30am Tomorrow's World: A revolutionary brain surgery procedure in which patients' bodies are dramatically cooled down before operations (7) (846)
8.00am The National Lottery Live (7) (161378)
8.10am Ballyhoo: Assumpta generously offers to help Father Clifford prepare for his driving test (7) (7) (55200)

9.00am News (7) and weather (582)
9.30am Men Behaving Badly: Gary's jealousy prompts him to make life as difficult as possible for Dorothy and her new love, Jamie. Tony is forced to make a monumental choice (7) (7) (85552)
10.00am They Think It's All Over: Comedian Jeff Green and Olympic heptathlete Denise Lewis join Gary Lineker, David Gower, Lee Hirst and Rory McGrath for the comedy sports quiz hosted by Nick Hancock (7) (830333)

10.35am Trading Places (1983) Two billionaire brothers arrange for young high-flying employee Dan Aykroyd to switch places with twelfth street hustler Eddie Murphy to test whether heredity or upbringing determines character. Also with Ralph Bellamy, Dan Aykroyd and Jamie Lee Curtis. Directed by John Landis (5357587)
12.25am Keeping Track (1985) with Margot Kidder and Michael Sarrazin. A female bank executive and a workaholic television journalist witness a bizarre robbery, which involves them in a deadly game of cat-and-mouse with a gang of assassins. Directed by Robin Swicord (118885)
2.05am Weather (2855156)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
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For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday

SKY 1
8.00am Morning Glory (78842) 9.00am Regis and Kathie Lee (6007) 10.00am American Idol (5803) 11.00am Out of Our Lives (7438) 12.00am The Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 1.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 2.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 3.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 4.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 5.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 6.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 7.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 8.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 9.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 10.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 11.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 12.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438)

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BBC2

6.00am Open University: Data Modelling (652571) 6.25am Are You Being Served? (651378) 6.50am Keep Your Distance (603701)
7.15am See Hear Breakfast News (7) (308281) 7.30am Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (8101533) 7.55am The Lowdown (1251591) 8.20am Philbert: The Frog (620268) 8.25am The Adventures of Benji Bee (614842) 8.35am The Racoonies (3392465)
9.00am Discovering Portuguese (672033) 9.25am Belief File (234465) 9.45am Words and Pictures (68674) 10.30am Numberline (6812571) 10.45am Cats' Eyes (6817025) 11.00am Moving to English (675281) 11.20am The Art (454658) 11.40am Slushy Island (446593) 12.00am The Shape of the World (7) (60216)
12.30pm Working Lunch (67858)
1.00am The Geography Collection (22406378) 1.25am Zig Zag (7055591) 1.45am Outside (6863455) 2.00am Philbert (7) (3010668) 2.05am Buzzy Bee (3012939) 2.10am Table Tennis World Championship highlights (7475200)
3.00am News (7) (6883387) 3.05am Phil Silvers (7290649) 3.30am Blockbusters (2513533) 3.55am News (7) (6883387) 4.00am Blockbusters (2513533) 4.25am Ready, Steady, Cook (585007) 4.55am Esther (7) (1547533) 5.30am Today's the Day (77129) 5.55am Turning Points (419303)
6.00am Star Trek: The Next Generation (7) (7) (192571)
6.45am Space Precinct (7) (67858)
7.30am Black Britain: Investigating how South Africa's vineyards are run in the aftermath of apartheid (7) (891)
8.00am University Challenge: Herts, Manchester College, Oxford, v Charing Cross Hospital Medical School (7) (8303)

1.00am News (7) and weather (22281)
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1.40am The Weather Show (9910303)
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9.30am Men Behaving Badly: Gary's jealousy prompts him to make life as difficult as possible for Dorothy and her new love, Jamie. Tony is forced to make a monumental choice (7) (7) (85552)
10.00am They Think It's All Over: Comedian Jeff Green and Olympic heptathlete Denise Lewis join Gary Lineker, David Gower, Lee Hirst and Rory McGrath for the comedy sports quiz hosted by Nick Hancock (7) (830333)

10.35am Trading Places (1983) Two billionaire brothers arrange for young high-flying employee Dan Aykroyd to switch places with twelfth street hustler Eddie Murphy to test whether heredity or upbringing determines character. Also with Ralph Bellamy, Dan Aykroyd and Jamie Lee Curtis. Directed by John Landis (5357587)
12.25am Keeping Track (1985) with Margot Kidder and Michael Sarrazin. A female bank executive and a workaholic television journalist witness a bizarre robbery, which involves them in a deadly game of cat-and-mouse with a gang of assassins. Directed by Robin Swicord (118885)
2.05am Weather (2855156)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ handset. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ is a registered trademark of the Video Programmer and is a trademark of Gemstar Development Ltd.

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday

SKY 1
8.00am Morning Glory (78842) 9.00am Regis and Kathie Lee (6007) 10.00am American Idol (5803) 11.00am Out of Our Lives (7438) 12.00am The Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 1.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 2.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 3.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 4.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 5.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 6.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 7.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 8.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 9.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 10.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 11.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438) 12.00am Oprah Winfrey Show (7438)

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SKY 15



EQUESTRIANISM 44

Tait ready to make mark at Badminton

SPORT

WEDNESDAY MAY 7 1997

CRICKET 45

Derbyshire on course for quarter-finals



Injury fears recede

Ravanelli targets Wembley return

BY DAVID MADDOCK

TWENTY-FOUR hours after being taken from the pitch at Old Trafford on a stretcher, his face contorted with the agony of injury and the apparent loss of his chance of playing in the FA Cup Final, Fabrizio Ravanelli bounded into the Riverside Stadium yesterday to announce that he may, after all, make an appearance at Wembley.

Even given his propensity for the dramatic, it is an astonishing turn-around, but after a scan at a Darlington hospital in the morning, the Middlesbrough centre forward learnt that what was feared to be a hamstring tear was, in fact, a far less serious injury.

Ravanelli said that he has no hope of playing in his side's two remaining FA Cup Final Premier League matches, which will decide the immediate fate of the club that he has persistently hinted he would like to leave, but the Cup Final, against Chelsea on May 17, is a different matter.

"I feel quite good and that is a great relief after the pain and worry of Monday," the Italian said. "I've got no chance of playing in the remaining two league matches, but I am now hopeful of making the Cup Final."

"I would rate my chances at 50-50. It was a great worry for me, but I am walking quite well today and I really am feeling a lot better about my chances of playing at Wembley. At least there is hope for me, and I feel good about that."

Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, was also optimistic as he confirmed that the injury was nowhere

near as extensive as was first thought. There was heavy swelling, he said, but the hamstring was not as badly damaged as the first bulletins suggested.

Fabrizio has a problem with the hamstring still, and so he remains a doubt," Robson said, "but the prospects are a lot brighter 24 hours on. The scan shows that there is no tear, which is what we feared when he was first injured. That is an improvement from Monday, and now there is real hope he will play."

Everton have ruled out the prospect of signing Jürgen Klinsmann as player-coach, but say there is still interest in securing his services as a player only.

A senior club official said that there had never been any intention of offering the manager's job to the Germany striker, merely confusion when Everton approached him to inquire whether he would be interested in joining the playing staff.

Klinsmann is also considering approaches from AC Milan, Torino and Real Madrid, who are all, apparently, ready to meet his demand for £50,000 per week in wages. Everton, understandably, are not confident of winning that particular battle.

There is, though, still a slight hope that Bobby Robson, the Barcelona coach, will become the manager at Goodison Park next season.

The former England coach began talks with Josep Lluís Núñez, the Barcelona president, last night, in an attempt to clarify his position. Robson is expected to have a clearer picture today of his prospects.

Hats off to Panama City in Vase thriller



John Reid produces Panama City, left, with a dramatic late run to snatch the spoils from Ivan Luis, hidden by the winner, and State Fair, nearside, in the Chester Vase yesterday. The popular three-day meeting on the Roodey got under way amid unseasonal snow flurries. Photograph: Hugh Routledge. Report, page 43

Report proposes overhaul of the Football League

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

STAND by, the revolution is about to begin. An independent report that was published yesterday proposes radical changes to take the Football League, perhaps kicking and screaming, into the next millennium.

The 142-page consultation document, which cost about £100,000 and took four months to produce, was presented in London by Deloitte & Touche, the management consultancy firm. Its proposals will be discussed at a specially convened meeting of league chairmen tomorrow but will not be voted on until the annual meeting next month. Even then, implementation is unlikely until the start of the 1998-99 season.

Gerry Boon, of Deloitte & Touche, delivered a grim message. "You must decide what you want to be," he said. "There is no standstill option, you are withering on the vine. You either go forward or backwards: there are no easy options. If you want to secure

a future, rather than defend the past, you have to consider this report."

Boon criticised the league's administrative structure, with its headquarters in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire, and labyrinth of committees. "The league is a big business and needs to act like one," he said. "It has a service to provide to clubs and should not undermine them. It must be market led and not administration driven."

"Communication is poor with clubs and within the clubs. Revenue generation has to be the primary concern of the league, it needs a proper business plan. The old management style has to go."

The key point of the report, and its most controversial, is the amalgamation of the 24-club third division with the 22-club Vauxhall Conference, which would then be split into two sections, north and south. Promotion to the second division could be increased to four or five clubs, including those from the play-offs, and one club from each section would be demoted into a reformed Conference.

"We feel very positive about this," John Moules, the secre-

tary of the Conference, said yesterday. "It's something we've been working towards for ten years. We're delighted that we now have a competition worthy of being included in the league structure."

Other proposals include the reorganisation of the Coca-Cola Cup, with sides from the FA Cup Premier League and first division not entering the competition until the third round. An additional early round, played over two legs, would be needed to accommodate the increased league membership. Later ties would be decided on the night, without replays.

The report also urges that

THIRD DIVISION

HOW IT COULD LOOK: North: Grimsby Town, Macclesfield Town, Shrewsbury Town, Hereford United, Rochdale, Chester City, Aldershot, Luton, Lincoln City, Mansfield Town, Macclesfield Town, Northwich Victoria, Southport, United, Scarborough, Southend United, Hull City, Leyton United, Rochdale, Haringey United, Doncaster Rovers, South, Charlton Athletic, Dover Athletic, Brighton, Exeter City, Farnborough Town, Haverhill, Scunthorpe, Northampton Town, Notts County, Rotherham United, Grimsby Town, Colchester United, Slough Town, Stevenage Borough, Cambridge United, Barnet, Woking United, Wokingham, Leyton Orient, Torquay United, Yeovil Town, Harts County, Peterborough United

Gascoigne runs out of time for England

BY KEVIN MCCARRA

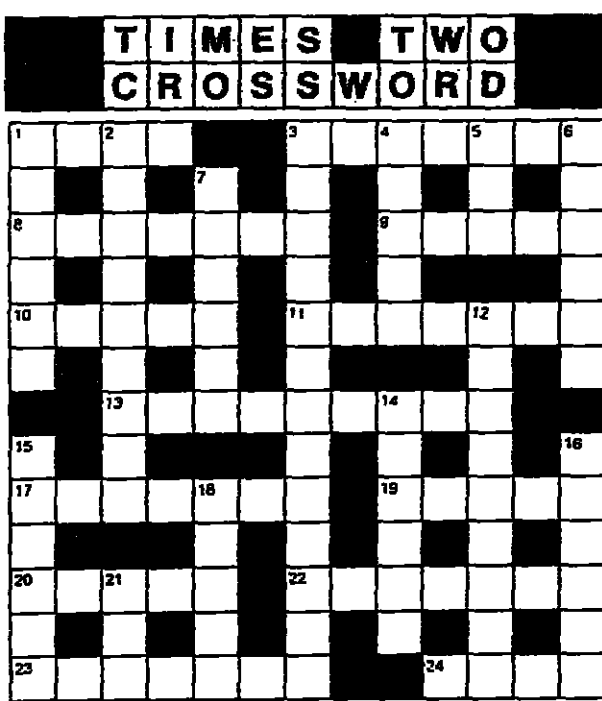
ANY faint prospect of Paul Gascoigne returning to the England squad for the World Cup qualifying match in Poland on May 31 seems to have disappeared. Although he is now back in action, following an injury to his ankle suffered in January, the midfielder player has only been used as a substitute by Rangers in their last two matches.

Walter Smith, the Rangers manager, said Gascoigne was suffering from a thigh strain that prevented him from last night's full game. With Rangers' final game of the season,

against Heart of Midlothian, taking place on Saturday, he now has no means of demonstrating his fitness to Glenn Hoddle, the England manager, before May 31.

Rangers travel to Dundee United this evening still looking for the point that will officially confirm them as champions for the ninth season in succession.

Given their six-point lead over Celtic and a goal difference that is superior by ten, Rangers are in little danger, but they will be eager to complete the formalities.



No 1087

ACROSS

- 1 Teasing (cat) raise (back) (4)
- 3 Frenzied (7)
- 5 Flowers pinned to dress (7)
- 9 Inarticulate sound, as of pig (5)
- 10 Face-protector: sun-shield (5)
- 11 Maintaining link out of play (2,5)
- 13 Crawfish, spiny lobster (9)
- 17 Snake (7)
- 19 Loathe (5)
- 20 Wild animal: harmless paper version (5)
- 22 Property: sounds for play (7)
- 23 Give authority to (7)
- 24 Tactic (4)

DOWN

- 1 Recess (6)
- 2 Pupa case (9)
- 3 Sharp rebuke (4,2,4,3)
- 4 Anxiety, remorse (5)
- 5 Type of cross: Gk. letter (3)
- 6 Memorable (tune) (6)
- 7 Respectable older woman: school nurse once (6)
- 12 Against professional code (6)
- 14 Groups of workers: a country (6)
- 15 Jean-Paul —, Fr. existentialist (6)
- 16 High-spirited, playful (6)
- 18 One shot from bow (5)
- 21 Interruption (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 1086

- ACROSS: 1 Rubric 5 Fetish 8 Adam 9 Aquarius 10 Penalty 11 Nippy 13 Short shrift 16 Nappy 18 Frigate 21 Uterine 22 Gilt 23 Ginovis 24 Salary
- DOWN: 2 Undress 3 Rumba 4 Chastity 5 Foul 6 Termini 7 Stump 12 Chastres 14 Orpheus 15 Titular 17 All in 19 Gogol 20 Kiss

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1082

- ACROSS: 1 Depart 3 Chaser 5 Pile 9 Inaction 10 Courtesan 13 Eager 15 Tarry 16 Pedal 18 Expedient 21 Malvoia 22 Knee 23 Tagged 24 Hubris
- DOWN: 1 Deput 2 Pellucid 3 Twine 5 Hackneyed 6 Swim 7 Remot 11 Title role 12 Syrup 14 Governor 16 Pelmet 17 Stress 19 Enoch 20 Flag
- PRIZE: of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND'S domestic or international network, is P Howe, Tonbridge Wells, Kent
- 2nd PRIZE: of a return ticket to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND'S domestic network, is E Fiedakowska, Norwich
- Prizes subject to availability.

Schalke seek revival in fortunes

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

GELESENKIRCHEN has had little to cheer about in recent years. It is a town, deep in the heart of Germany's industrial Ruhr, where rising unemployment has deepened the contrast between its blue-collar gloom and the brighter lights of Munich, Hamburg, Berlin and the rest. Even its football team has failed to lighten the atmosphere.

Until tonight, that is, for Gelsenkirchen will raise the roof at the Parkstadion when Schalke 04 run out for the first leg of the Uefa Cup final against Internazionale. That Inter represent affluent, fashionable Milan will increase the volume even more.

Indeed, the teams fill their allotted roles almost perfectly. Inter are cosmopolitan, expensively assembled and even if Youri Djorkaeff, Jocelyn Angloma and to his immense frustration, Paul Ince are suspended for the first leg, they can still call on Ivan Zamorano, of Chile, Aron Winter, of Holland, Javier Zanetti, of Argentina, Ciriaco Sforza, of Switzerland, and a posse of Italy internationals.

Schalke boast no such stars. Olaf Thon used to play for Germany, but no longer does, and while Johan de Kock is an occasional Holland international and Marc Wilmots plays for Belgium, neither of them are the Cerezas, Jiri Nemec or Radoslaw Latul, are exactly household names.

For Roy Hodgson, the Inter coach, shortly to be Blackburn Rovers' manager, over-confidence may be his team's

greatest enemy. "Schalke are one of the best-supported clubs in the Bundesliga and it will be a tough game," he said. "Only a fool underestimates his opponent." Clearly, he is paying no attention to Schalke's recent run of eight league games without a win.

Patrick Blondeau could be forgiven for thinking "there, but for the grace of God..." when Inter attempt to reclaim the trophy they won in 1991

and 1994, for the French defender was in the AS Monaco side beaten by the Italians in the semi-finals. Instead, he is completing his move to Sheffield Wednesday, which, after a medical today, should see his services secured for a fee of £1.8 million.

Fred Davies, at 57, the league's oldest manager, is out of a job after being dismissed yesterday by Shrewsbury Town, who have been relegated to the third division of the Nationwide League. In contrast, Gordon Strachan has been told by Bryan Richardson, the Coventry City chairman, that he will not be sacked, even if Coventry are relegated from the FA Cup Premier League next weekend. Mick Jones has been given a two-year contract by Plymouth Argyle, where he had been caretaker-manager since the departure of Neil Warnock in February.

Robbie Fowler, of Liverpool, has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association after clashing with David Unsworth, the Everton defender, after the pair had been sent off in the Merseyside derby.



Ince must sit on sidelines for Internazionale tonight

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English cricket captain

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